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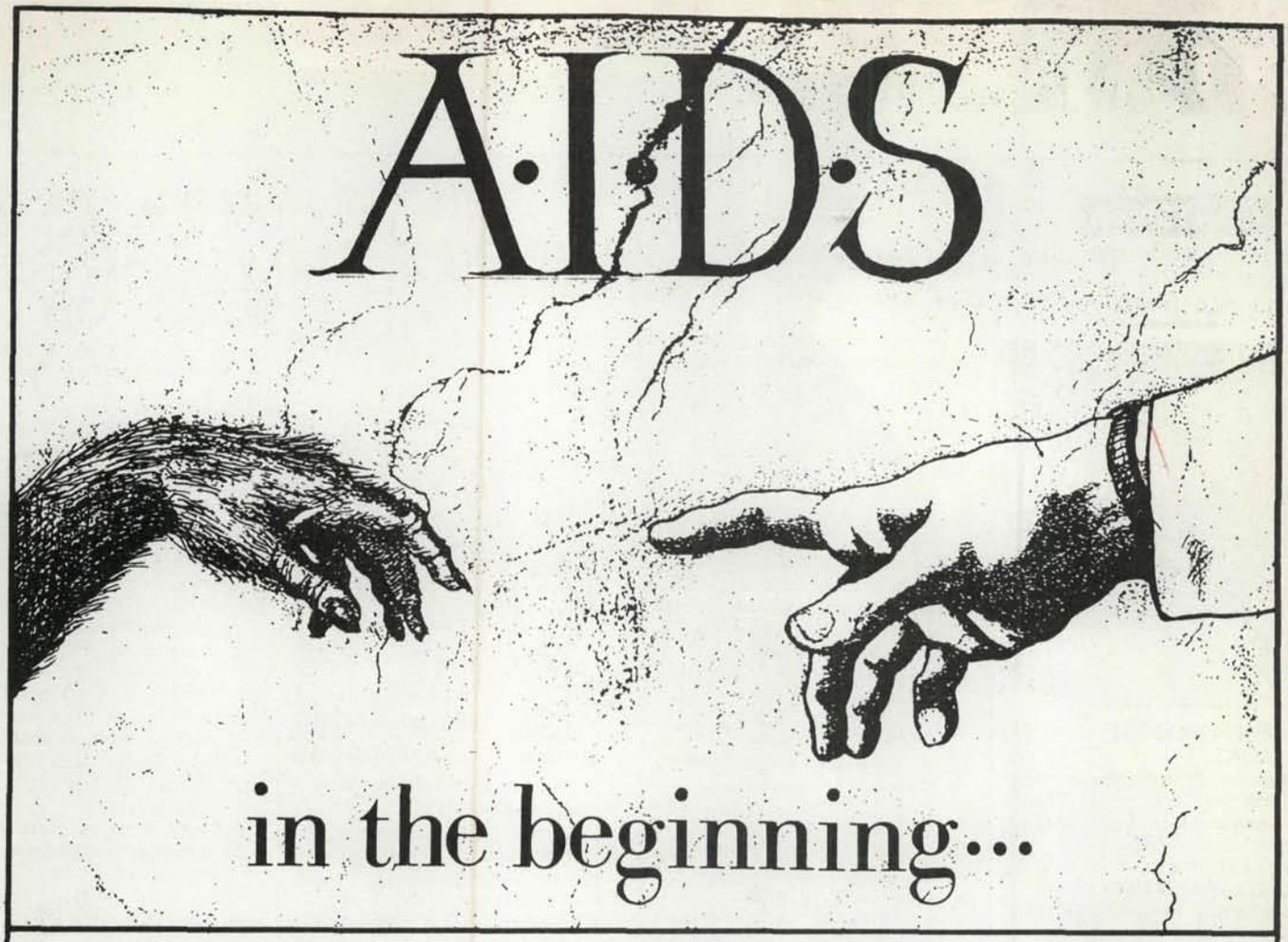

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NEW STATESMAN

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NEW STATESMAN
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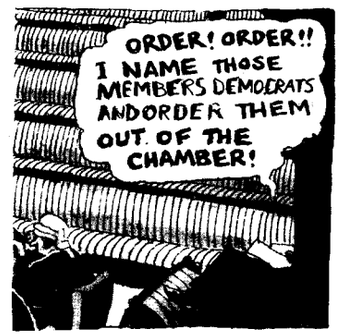
1688 and all that

NEXT YEAR two political anniversaries will be celebrated: those of 1968 and 1688. We celebrate 1968 in style with a special supplement in this issue. As with much Christmas fare, it offers a feast of jollification which may leave a slight taste of nausea. But we do not apologise for the space we have given to our assessment. The '60s were the time when modern life — or, if you prefer, consumer capitalism — arrived in Western Europe. 1968 was both a protest against this and an attempt to ensure that the potential of the new era was dedicated to human ends. It was a protest from below which tried to claim the new powers of education, the media and science-driven capitalism for the people rather than the old state and multinational corporations. The failure of '68 was that it was more an expression of rage and frustration than a coherent programme.



In this country, the more serious anniversary is the official, not the unofficial, one: 1688, not 1968. Three hundred years ago the so-called 'bloodless' revolution (think of Ireland!) established the constitutional settlement that has presided over the United Kingdom ever since. It made Britain, in the words of Macaulay, the most democratic aristocracy and — this is our problem today — the most aristocratic democracy in the world. For more than 200 years this extraordinary settlement ensured the pre-eminent development — industrial, imperial and political — of Britain. In a limited sense, Britain could up to 1940 pride itself as being at the forefront of democratic life. This is true despite the exploitation of empire and the appeasement of the dictators (for at the same time this was a country to which refugees could flee for haven). No more. The preservation of the 300-year-old settlement is now an incubus which sucks the democratic instincts from the people. The very weight and sacredness of the institutions of this *ancien regime* crush the life out of radical politics. Paradoxically, Mrs Thatcher's abuses of state power have intensified an awareness of how undemocratic, because it is unwritten, the fundamental British constitution really is. She has used a uniquely unaccountable executive and centralised state apparatus to narrow the range of democratic decision-making and restrict competition for political power. In response, there have been the first stirrings for a radicalising of British democracy, which understand full well the dangers which lie in complacent acceptance of 1688.

Nonetheless, the good old regime will celebrate its Glorious Revolution for all it is worth. The Palace of Westminster, the sacred (unknowable) constitution, the monarchy (Prince Charles, you can bet, will make a speech) and even the BBC will be ceremonially wheeled out to inflate the sense of pride in the British way of life. An insufferable pride which many now feel is stifling any real way forward out of Britain's historic crisis.

It is important to comprehend what was indeed progressive in the tradition which will be ballyhooed in Elgarian splendour: something it was easy to see when the whole of continental Europe was subjugated by fascism and we were not. But it is also essential to argue today that this has changed. Now it is Europe which is more democratic, and the United Kingdom which is less so. It is we who have failed to escape from the past.

The *New Statesman* has been at the forefront of the attempts to bring democracy and freedoms to the British people. Through the editorships of Bruce Page to John Lloyd, the magazine has faced official harassment for its exposés of official secrecy and the abuse of big government. In more than words we have stood for freedom of information and the rights of citizens to know how they are governed. In the end, we are confident that our view of democracy will prevail. With a new written constitution and Bill of Rights we can put an end to the Glorious Revolution of the aristocracy.

1968 was a major step towards this outcome for it was above all else a *democratic* movement — which scorned the leaders the media sought to impose upon it. Indeed, it was to a fault ultra-democratic. But its object in Britain was the old consensus which has now found itself under siege from the right in a different and deeply undemocratic fashion. Mrs Thatcher claims to believe in liberal values, but her liberalism is economic, not political or social. She claims to be committed to democracy, but only in the limited sense of periodic elections to determine which party takes command of our antique and authoritarian state. (That's why she is dedicated to the extinction of the 'alien' values of British socialism, or rather social democracy, as modestly expressed by Neil Kinnock's Labour Party. There's room in her Britain only for Thatcherism.)

The task for socialists in the coming years is to advocate and argue for a modern and pluralistic democracy. The roll-call of reform is now becoming familiar: a written constitution, freedom of information, electoral reform, devolution, equal opportunities. We'd add here that the arguments must be European and internationalist in scale, cosmopolitan not parochial. For if Britain is ever to be socialist, it must first be made democratic. □

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CHRISTMAS DIARY

I've never liked David Alton. Something to do with the oleaginous way he smarms all over the older ladies at Liberal conferences, playing the part of the goody-goody grandson who *always* comes home at Christmas. Against stiff competition, he wins my nomination as Most Dishonest Politician of the Year for his attempt to reduce the abortion limit to 18 weeks.

Alton doesn't even believe in his own Bill: he is actually against all abortion, but is too much of a coward to propose that to parliament just yet. And his biggest propaganda weapon is a photo of a foetus (obligingly printed by *Today* on its front page in glorious Murdoch-colour) which in fact wouldn't be 'protected' by his Bill anyway, since it is 18 weeks old. That has not stopped him pretending otherwise.

But the worst dishonesty is his sanctimonious claim that the Bill is an expression of his religious faith. Alton tells us that he is a devout Roman Catholic and therefore regards abortion as a sin. I wonder. A glance at *Hansard* shows that he has consistently voted in favour of legalising male homosexual acts: he did so on 22 July 1980 (an amendment extending the 1967 Sexual Offences Act to Scotland) and again on 25 October 1982 (ditto for Northern Ireland). For Catholics homosexuality is a sin: the Pope is as unequivocal on the subject as on abortion. David, it seems, is devout only when it suits him. Perhaps Creeping Jesus of the Year would be a more suitable award.

○

A year in which yet another general election was won by what we used to call the Stupid Party, and England's cricketers refused to walk when the umpire's finger went up: 1987 can hardly be considered a great vintage. It should be drunk straight away. We must then sleep off the effects as best we can.

But there are one or two reasons for raising a glass. Ian McEwan's novel *The Child In Time*. Keith Best's imprisonment (cut short, alas, by the Appeal Court). Peter Bruinvel's nemesis. New LPs from the Communards and Dwight Yoakam. The award of the Crime Writers' Association's gold dagger to Barbara Vine, a.k.a. Ruth Rendell. Oh, and the news that there are now more cats than dogs in the United States.

○

A memory of election night. At the BBC's party in the council chamber of Broadcasting House, Jimmy Savile slumps in an armchair with a cigar locked between his jaws and a bottle of bitter lemon in his hand. He stares through his dark glasses at a television screen, apparently oblivious to the two Japanese journalists beside him who are frenziedly working out percentages on their pocket calculators. He remains there all evening. From time to time a particular result takes his fancy. He cackles manically. The Japanese look up, startled, and then return to their fascinating calculations.

○

This was the year in which the privatisation fraud was finally rumbled. The collapse of the BP share issue was a joy to behold, not least for the spectacle of underwriters wetting their pinstripes in terror when it dawned on them that, after years of gaining on the swings, they might lose a bit on the roundabouts.

Better still was the national explosion of frustration with British Telecom which forced Sir George Jefferson to take an early bath. True, there's no chance that anything will improve under his dim-witted successor: a friend's daughter living on her own in London, who asked for a phone in her flat, has just been told that BT will not even consider it until March. But at least no one will ever again fall for the line that 'privatisation' has something to do with user-friendly efficiency.

The first privatised BT engineer to visit me managed to smash an Art Deco lamp and accidentally cut off the phone. More recently, an engineer who came to convert a socket refused to move it a few feet along a wall. My partner rang the supervisor to complain that we'd never had trouble like this in the past.

'Yeah,' he replied, 'but we're privatised now and engineers have a lot more jobs per day. We have to think of our shareholders rather than our subscribers.'

'But, I'm not a shareholder.'

'Yeah,' the supervisor sneered. 'But I am.'

○

Another memory of election night. As my gloom deepens into misery in the small hours, I notice a message flashing on to a monitor at Broadcasting House: RECOUNT IN ISLINGTON SOUTH. My companion and I race across London to Islington town hall. The Alliance candidate, George Cunningham, is a curmudgeonly old brute at the best of times but by now he is positively furious, dark eyebrows bristling in disbelief at the idea that he might not take the seat from Labour's Chris Smith. Chris is the only openly gay MP in the Commons and some of the more reptilian SDP canvassers have fought a very nasty campaign indeed. But to no avail. Eventually George Cunningham has to stop demanding recounts and sulkily accept the inevitable, while we carry Chris shoulder-high along Upper Street. Soon afterwards, dawn rises over London.

○

On the day that Mikhail Gorbachev came to Oxfordshire, American F1-11 bombers from the nearby Upper Heyford base came screeching over my rooftop. It is no more than I would expect. Living a couple of miles from a colony of more than 10,000 USAF goons confirms all one's worst prejudices. You see them in the local video shops hiring *Top Gun* and *Rambo*. You see them driving their huge American cars full tilt down narrow country lanes. You see them at their ghastly 'family open days', where they sell porn books and t-shirts of the 'Let's Nuke Iran' variety. Their heightened aerial activity on the day Gorbachev came — and the next day, as the INF treaty was signed — conveyed a simple message: you won't get rid of us.

And they're right. Few people seem to have noticed the suggestion that additional nuclear bombers may be deployed at Upper Heyford to 'compensate for' (i.e. circumvent) the cruise deal. This ought to provoke uproar. But as their antics round our village prove, the US Air Force don't care two hoots what we think anyway.

○

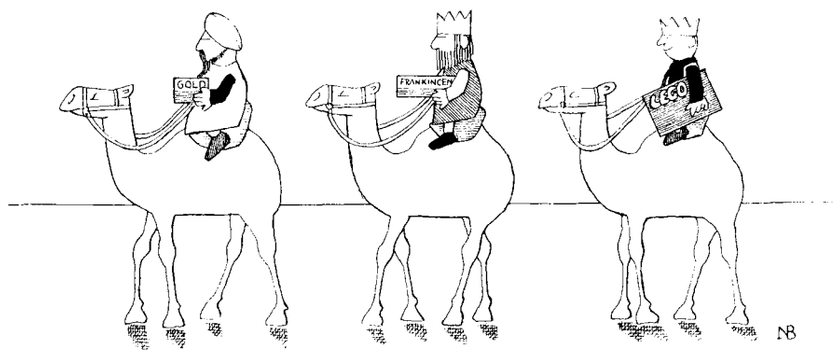
Incidentally, a pleasing side-effect of the INF deal has been to force the fake multilateralists to come clean. Politicians who have spent years boasting of their commitment to nuclear disarmament — 'multilateral, not one-sided' — are now admitting that, well, er, they didn't really mean it. Thatcher has exposed herself already, and I think we should start collecting others.

One useful scalp is that of Henry Kissinger, who at the start of the Washington summit was asked by the *Herald Tribune* what outcome would worry him most. 'A renewed commitment to the elimination of all nuclear weapons,' the old mass-murderer replied. 'This, I believe, is impossible to fulfil and undesirable. It plays into the hands of those who want to stigmatise the weapons . . .' Indeed.

○

A final memory of election night. At about 8 a.m. I am preparing for bed when a friend rings. He lives in Moscow, but he tells me that he flew back for the day purely to vote. I am momentarily impressed by his devotion to anti-Thatcherite duty. Then I remember. His constituency is Islington South and he adores George Cunningham. I don't need to ask: his, I realise, was one of the votes that nearly unseated Chris Smith. Thanks a lot.

Francis Wheen



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POLITICAL SKETCH

The Year of the Sniffer Dog

Edward Pearce

IT SEEMS APT, does it not, that 1987 should have ended as it began, with a virtuoso display of despotism from the lady who brought you Tisdall and Ponting. The Zircon affair of January-February (which died writ in hand in November) was sweetly complemented by the Radio 4 affair of December. Policemen have not yet arrived at the fourth floor of Broadcasting House to take away Jenny Abramsky and Anne Sloman but Lord, I've only just started writing. They did descend on BBC Scotland in February, in that unbelievable occupied-Czechoslovakian way which Our Lady of Finchley has made all her own. A search with sniffer dogs is all we need to finish the year in the key in which Mrs Thatcher feels most at home, that of 'national security'.

Speaking of sniffer dogs, I cannot resist digressing a couple of years back to the time when John Stanley was a junior minister at Defence. Stanley, a perfect *temperamental* Thatcherite at the centre of the Ponting case, is demented about security. On this occasion he had visited Norway to inspect some floating docks and a light plane had been sent to bring him back. "I demand to know," said Stanley, "if that aircraft has been checked by sniffer dogs". "No Minister," said the official concerned, "but it has been very thoroughly searched and it's entirely safe, and there is no dog with us." Stanley then flatly refused to enter the plane. He insisted that an MoD-accredited dog be flown out especially to guarantee his personal security. He was obeyed, the dog was brought, the plane sniffed and all returned happily to a secure United Kingdom, though the poor hound, himself now a security risk of sorts, spent the next six months in quarantine.

One quotes that story to give a notion of the caste of mind present in senior office under this government. Stanley is currently number two in Northern Ireland, making life intolerable for everyone around him. The quiet mania of a man who once said "The British people don't deserve Margaret Thatcher" (and, indeed, they don't) merely gives pantomime quality to the philosophy which Sir Patrick Mayhew must carry to the courts. As Zircon began so Radio 4 continues; so we spent the entire year watching Malcolm Turnbull, counsel for the man who may not be mentioned on pain of prosecution, pick up the British government and hang it out to dry.

> ***As Zircon began so Radio 4 continues; so we spent the entire year watching Malcolm Turnbull, counsel for the man who may not be mentioned on pain of prosecution, pick up the British government and hang it out to dry***

There was something tragic about the fate last year of Robert Armstrong. He may have been economical with the truth — which is downright profligacy compared to Mrs Thatcher during Westland — but he loves Mozart and he had done the right liberal thing in Ireland, guiding her to the Anglo-Irish agreement through the screams of the Orange lobby. Armstrong, for all his style of an archimandrate charged with a heavenly mystery, was a fairly humane influence, and how many are there of those around the lady? He suffered as a surrogate for the Prime Minister's mania. Although Malcolm Turnbull, who, instructively, is a Tory, has come to like Armstrong, the British civil servant had, while it mattered, the rough effect upon the Australian of a chance meeting between Walter Pater and Paul Hogan.

SIR ROBERT must be added to the long list of people, supposedly friends and colleagues, whom the lady has used up and stubbed out; though he is happily more robust than his predecessor namesake, the late Sir William Armstrong, reduced in the time of Edward Heath to going on all fours and quoting from the Book of Revelations.

But 1987 saw politicans outside the Tory party engaged in destruction. Who, in December of last year, would have credited the notion of David Owen heading a faction of three, on the uttermost margins of existence, the *karst* of politics, destroyed by David Steel . . . and by David Owen?

An old friend of his unmaliciously analysed Owen: "A gifted man, an intelligent one, deeply attractive but no knowledge of history and a quite hopeless strategist". It still seems strange that Owen, a hate object, I know, to most *NS* readers, but not to me, should have been routed by the tempered lethargy made exiguous flesh which is David Steel. I had three days listening to Steel during the election. I didn't at all dislike him, but I have never seen such desolated, half-hanged lassitude. Even on the even of the poll in the Drill Hall at Peebles, he was good for 12 minutes of apathetic affirmation. Then suddenly, the deadly vote in and the dust coating his palate, he ups and kills Owen dead.

It couldn't have been done without help, and Owen really seems to possess the Lord Raglan touch. Sensible people in the SDP, notably Bob Maclennan, responded to the Steel epistle with the rational instinct to play it long. If ever there was a time to say "Very interesting, we must have a nice chat about it some other time, but I'm off to Barbados for a long rest and anyway we don't want to rush anything. How's your diary for September?" this was it.

Instead we got decisive leadership and a brisk confident step from 60 feet onto the asphalt. Owen is often compared with Mrs Thatcher, whom he overrates; but Thatcher, in her primitive way, combines panic and rage with a furtive circumspection which sees her foxily right. If Steel had sent *her* a letter, she would have sent in a sniffer dog.

For some people the election will be the event of the year, though, God knows, it was a dull, mendacious, trivial affair most of the time. The phrase which stuck in my mind was Mrs Thatcher's allusion to Britain having a bulldog economy. The Kinnock team slipped up badly on that one. The press release they *should* have issued would have read, "The bulldog, as a consequence of specialised breeding, suffers from many congenital disorders, of which chronic heart weakness invariably occasioning early death is only the most obvious. The life-span of a bulldog is in the range of three to five years!" Actually, that better defines the US economy and the state of the stockmarkets seems to confirm the diagnosis. Oh, by the way, in 1987 Wall Street crashed.

The election was notable for another fit of hysteria when, according to the friend of Mr Tim Bell, the immediate entourage of the Prime Minister witnessed "Wobble Thursday". Apparently Mrs Thatcher became convinced that a single dipping poll from fallible Gallup in the midst of a statistical perspective otherwise *horizon bleu* meant the arrival of Neil Kinnock in chariots and removal men in pantechnicons. Accordingly, with that touch of shuddering, bright-eyed concentration which troubles people in other contexts, she set mechanically about packing.

> ***The election was notable for a fit of hysteria when the immediate entourage of the Prime Minister witnessed "Wobble Thursday". Apparently Mrs Thatcher became convinced that a single dipping poll from fallible Gallup meant the arrival of Neil Kinnock in chariots and removal men in pantechnicons. Accordingly, she set about packing***

The undivulged (and undiscussed) aspect of Wobble Thursday, the thing which quite fascinates me, is — who blew it to the press? Of the select company present at that little meeting, neither Lord Whitelaw nor Norman Tebbit (who run a terrifying little combo when they feel inclined) would do anything so childish. The word is put about that John Wakeham, a huge loser in the Empress's favour since, may have done so. The friends of Wakeham credibly say that after seven years as a Chief Whip that isn't his way, and the same friends nod towards Lord Young, whose friends (if you're still with me) were running around Fleet St at the time. If it was Young who told, and no one would make such a disgraceful suggestion, and if he is also letting the blame fall onto Wakeham, one can hardly contain one's admiration.

What my friends on the left are missing in 1987 are the seeds of huge Tory quarrels, real Theatre of Cruelty. The war between Young and Young's enemies will provide wonderful copy for a round-up of the major events of 1988. □

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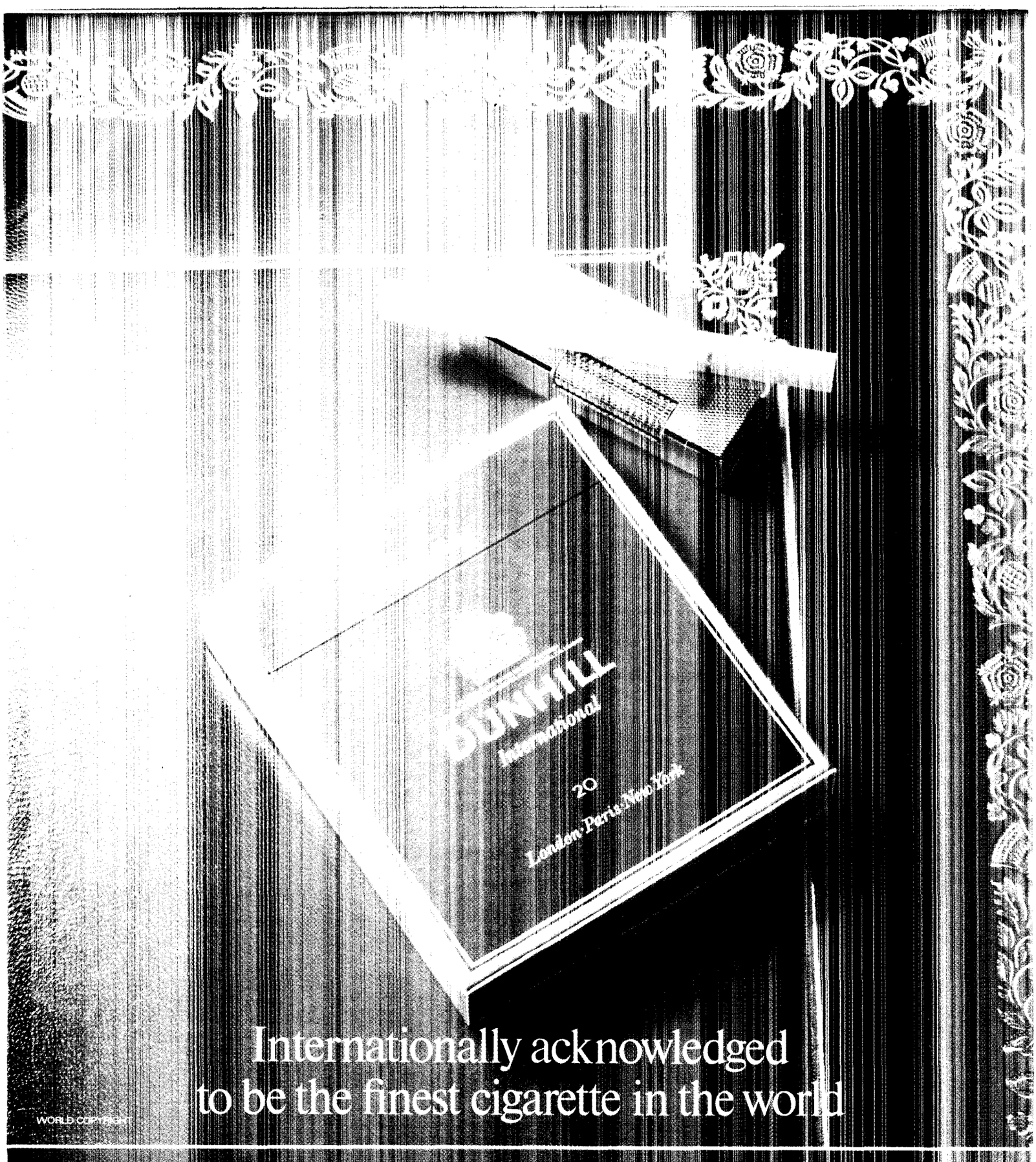

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'Promoting' homosexuality

HOMOSEXUALS are second-class citizens — it's official. That's the essence of the clause in the Local Government Bill which stops local councils "promoting" homosexuality.

The clause, put forward by right-wing Tory backbencher Dame Jill Knight, is the most serious denial of the liberties of homosexuals by government since sex between males was made a criminal offence in 1885. The "nightmare scenario" now being presented by lesbian and gay rights campaigners talks of books being removed from libraries, licences for gay clubs being withdrawn, social and cultural groups closing because councils cannot offer them financial support and councils banned from doing anything to tackle anti-gay discrimination and prejudice.

The vague terminology of the clause is such that this interpretation is by no means far-fetched. On the other hand, because it is so loose, it might well be possible for local council lawyers to drive a coach and horses through it if one is taken to court over a pro-gay initiative.

What, after all, does "promotion" mean? Listening to the debate on the clause in committee last week, it was clear that while the Government and the Opposition could both say that they were against local authorities "promoting homosexuality", they didn't share the same interpretation. Offering "positive images" of homosexuality in the classroom does not equal promotion, said the Opposition. Oh yes it does, said the Government.

By choosing to support the clause, but differ in interpretation, the Labour front bench lost an opportunity to attack the anti-gay motives of the Tory backbenchers which masqueraded as a concern for "family values." David Wilshire, the Spelthorne MP who proposed the Amendment on the committee, made clear that he sees homosexuality as immoral and abnormal. What is alarming is that his reactionary ranting (Mr Wilshire seems to rely on *Sun* editorials for his facts and opinions) has been taken up by the government. Local Government Minister Michael Howard laid down the official line: "I do not believe that is any part of a local authority's duty to suggest that homosexuality is on an equal footing with heterosexuality."

The fact that the government believes gay men and lesbians to be inferior has not been stated as explicitly before. But it comes as no surprise after Mrs Thatcher's conference speech in October when she attacked local authorities for teaching that school students have "an inalienable right to be gay".

The whole issue has been used by the Tories to bash an embarrassed Labour Party. There can have been few sights in Parliament recently as ugly as the spectacle of Michael Howard sneering at the Labour benches: "If there are those who can't support it, I hope they will tell the committee why."

Labour's handling of the issue has infuriated many lesbian and gay activists who are now crying "Betrayal". It seems churlish to criticise the front bench for not walking blindly into a Tory trap. Instead of a vainglorious, but ideologically pure, charge at the guns, Labour decided to fight a rearguard guerrilla action. In the current climate, faced with a Tory majority of 100, these tactics are correct.

Indeed, the amendments to the clause which Labour tabled at the Bill's report stage would have made it ineffective, by exempting any action designed to counter discrimination, protect civil rights, or provide information and counselling to school pupils. By refusing to accept the amendments, the Government has been forced into saying, in effect, that it favours discrimination against homosexuals. In future, then, the government will not be able to assert hypocritically, as David Wilshire did last week, that it is not anti-gay.

For the Labour Party, the uncomfortable question which must be faced is whether this clause would have come forward had boroughs like Ealing and Haringey been more cautious in their approach to gay rights, instead of going at it hammer and sickle.

But for gay men and lesbians, the crucial question is what next? Having got their way this time, what else is the Tory right planning? Some would support Chief Constable Anderton in his call, last weekend, for homosexuality to be recriminalised. And anyone who read David Wilshire's letter in last Saturday's *Guardian*, where he spoke of homosexuality as a 'changeable condition', can only view the future with fear. If we survive the third term without further erosion of such little liberties that we have today, we will have fought a successful campaign.

Paul Davies

● *As if lesbians and gay men didn't feel beleaguered enough, last Saturday morning the offices of* Capital Gay *were set on fire. The arson destroyed £20,000-worth of desk top publishing equipment which the weekly paper had just bought and not yet insured. If you think a donation might be a good seasonal gesture, send it to Capital Gay, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X 0AP.*

Arthritic justice

MR A (not his real name), a best-selling novelist and well-known prat, is falsely accused by a newspaper of adultery. We all have a good laugh and he sues the newspaper. It pays him £500,000 damages for his hurt feelings and he has the last laugh.

Mrs B (not her real name), a widow in her 70s, was prescribed the anti-arthritis drug Opren in 1981. She subsequently contracted an unpleasant skin disease which brings her out in painful rash when exposed to sunlight. She sued Opren's manufacturers, Eli Lilly. Last week it offered her a settlement — which would probably work out at about £2,000 — on condition that she doesn't reveal how much it actually is, and that she doesn't campaign against the company. Her solicitors are advising her to accept. If she doesn't, the company says that none of the other 1,300 litigants will get a penny.

Everyone can see that it's a scandal, but there are several layers to be disentangled:

○ Eli Lilly's imposition on Mrs B of a vow of silence. It looks bad, but is not that uncommon. She may well think it worthwhile if it gets her more money. And it doesn't bind the rest of us.

○ Mrs B is lucky to be taking legal action at all. As her pension income is just over £5,585 a year she — like 500 other Opren litigants — isn't eligible for legal aid. She had been relying on the fact that some litigants *were* legally aided and were acting as test cases for all of them. But in June the Court of Appeal ruled that all the claimants would have to pay some of the costs. Mrs B would have had to drop out of the action, had not a philanthropic millionaire, Godfrey Bradman, agreed to underwrite all the legal costs. This is hardly a satisfactory state of affairs, and there are several alternative systems which would solve the problem, but the government shows no sign of wanting to introduce them.

○ The sum offered is strikingly low — and not just by Mr A's standards. The going rate for dermatitis these days is £6-7,000. This is a puzzle, and at least one solicitor outside the main negotiating consortiums is advising his clients to hold out for more. Mrs B's solicitors will have at least two factors in mind:

○ To take Eli Lilly to court they would probably have to prove *negligence* by the company, which is tricky. From March next year, the Consumer Protection Act 1987 will remove that requirement, though only to comply with a European Community directive. But it won't be retrospective and in any case a defence of "development risk" will be available to manufacturers. This means that a manufacturer can try to show that the state of scientific knowledge at the time was not sufficiently advanced to allow the defect to be discovered. And claimants will still have to show that the product was the cause of their suffering — never easy with medicines. "No fault compensation" is also an idea sometimes discussed: compensation would be paid from government funds or from compulsory insurance policies. But this is arguably more appropriate to accidents than to harm allegedly caused by faulty products.

○ Mrs B is old; if she were to die, her estate might still have a theoretical right to her claim, but needless to say that would do her no good. The paperwork in the case is phenomenal: the 1.3 million documents involved piled on top of each other would be as high as a three storey building.

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In the United States, the son of one dead Opren victim won $4 million from the company. Even if it were proved negligent here, Eli Lilly could easily afford much higher payments. Last year its sales were $3.72 billion, and its pharmaceutical group had what the chairman described as "an outstanding year". If a string of elderly Opren victims appeared in court, then the company might be shamed into paying up, but it is clearly banking on that not happening. Meanwhile, its attitude, together with government inertia about reforming the system, makes Mrs B something less than a citizen.

Jolyon Jenkins

What's up, doc?

THE GOVERNMENT'S weekend propaganda offensive against the delinquent medics from the Royal Colleges who dared to warn that the NHS was in danger of a breakdown seems at first sight to fall puzzlingly short of answering the substance of those warnings. Plainly, consultants have been defending vested interests during the government's efforts to shake up the service and some undoubtedly exploit NHS facilities for private practice. So what's new? Equally plainly, the crisis in the NHS cannot be explained away by the doctors' selfishness. So what's up? Mrs Thatcher is warning the doctors to shut up or be turned over. It's the Thatcher equivalent to placing a severed horse's head in the doctors' (pay) beds. ●

Police vs Law Society

SUSPECTS held in police custody are consistently being denied their legal right to see a solicitor, according to criminal lawyers throughout the country. The problem now threatens a serious row between the police and the Law Society, which the Home Office will have to resolve.

In one recent case, a Dartmouth solicitor, John Hansell, acted for three out of four defendants who had been taken into custody. When he went to see the three at a detention centre in Torquay, he was only allowed to see the first client. When he asked to see the second, the custody officer, after consultation with his superior, denied access, saying that there was a "conflict of interest" between the defendants.

Shortly after, the police told Hansell that the case was considered a "serious arrestable offence" under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. What counts as a "serious arrestable offence" is largely up to the police — it depends partly on the police's assessment of the distress caused to the alleged victim. (In one case the theft of a nest of tables was held to fall within the definition.) One result of such a classification is that suspects can be denied access to a lawyer for up to 36 hours.

What happened next surprised Hansell. "Within a few minutes of the police denying us access to our second client, they had taken it upon themselves to call in the duty solicitor to see this person. Clearly this negated any suggestion of the matter being a 'serious arrestable offence'." The police, he points out, clearly felt that the particular defendants should be isolated from any form of communication.

Hansell's experience isn't at all uncommon, according to Andrew Lockley, the Law Society's Director of Legal Practice — he says he has had many complaints about such malpractice. Neither is it new — it arose during investigations into the Broadwater Farm disturbances — but it has got worse since the Act came into force. The Law Society's view, enshrined in guidelines published last year, is that it is up to solicitors, not the police, to determine whether there are conflicts of interest. They have to "listen to the police and weigh the factors they consider relevant, and balance them against your client's interest".

This gentleman's agreement is now breaking down because of the police refusal to trust lawyers; and the Law Society has announced that it is to take up the matter with the Home Office.

Is all this just special pleading by solicitors who want to act for as many clients as possible? Not really: the trouble is that even if each defendant *wanted* a separate solicitor, the courts would probably refuse to grant legal aid. There is considerable pressure to save the legal aid fund by appointing one solicitor for several co-defendants.

Jolyon Jenkins

A question of class

THE CHURCH of England is like the Labour Party: an amalgam of groups and factions, each passionately maintaining totally incompatible opinions and held together mainly by a long tradition and social power. In these terms the current debate is easily recognisable: is the Archbishop of Canterbury the hero for keeping the whole show on the road? Or is he the villain for compromising principle to expediency or popular demand?

Unfortunately however, the analogy is not satisfactory. Because the apparent "centrists", the so-called Liberal Establishment, are not in the business of mediating and balancing between the Evangelicals on the one hand and the Anglo Catholics (of which Dr Bennett who wrote the preface to *Crockford's Clerical Directory* and subsequently committed suicide was a member — and, it is proper to add, so am I) on the other.

The Liberal Establishment, which likes to present itself as the middle ground, is in fact a "party" itself — a party that sees itself as The Church, with odd splinter groups of politicos and fanatics warring at the edges. It is common to refer to both the other two major groups as conservative. But there has been a confusion: many members of both groups are not Conservative in any political sense, but rather "traditonalist" in their theological methods. Recently — as over the ordination of women — we have seen alliances between these two groups *against* the Liberal Establishment.

The charge brought against the Archbishop of Canterbury in the traditionally anonymous preface to the *Directory* was that of furthering his own party interests. Because of the use of the word "liberal" this may come over as a simple accusation of "wetness", but the Liberal Establishment is not so much liberal as it is Established; not merely by Act of Settlement, but as one of the institutions of the state. The Church of England enjoys enormous prestige and privilege; this whole mess is, I believe, a question of class and class power.

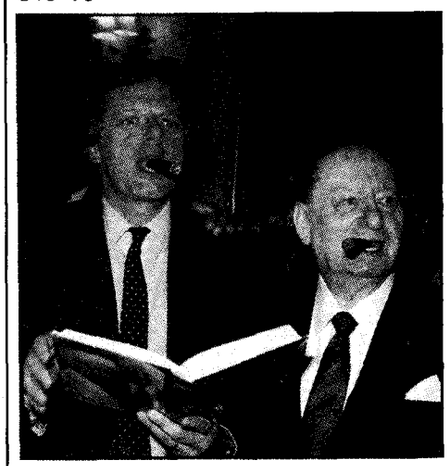
That elite regiment, the Scots Guards, owns a fine picture of a young officer leading a tank charge — the officer chosen to represent the Scots Guards in its glory is the present Archbishop of Canterbury. This is symbolic of the close relationship between the Church's leadership and the officer class elsewhere in British society. Although the Church's establishment refused Thatcher her Falklands victory parade there have been no establishment voices raised in protest at the now notorious vetting of bishops' appointments by 10 Downing Street. It is worth the occasional thwarting of their own appointments system to keep those close links. This is why feelings are so deeply hurt at the least suggestion of politicking or campaigning: Dr Bennett clearly hit a nerve.

This is why this sordid factional infight does matter. The largest landowner in Britain, with national influence (both through representation in the House of Lords, and through its undeniable psycho-cultural muscle) has, despite its democratic posturings in the shape of Synod, remained firmly under the control of a club of "public schoolboys" — who can afford "progressive" theological notions, but will not abandon, or share, social and political power.

Sara Maitland

If the caption fits

No 48



How gan you gork wig a gigar in your gouth? Is Michael Grade saying: 'Me? Chief executive of Channel Four? You must be joking. I didn't apply'? Or is he gobsmacked, with uncle Lew doing the talking? You have time to think about it: give us captions, thinks bubbles or anti-smoking propaganda by Monday 4 January. Tenner for the best. No special prizes, Christmas or no Christmas.

Winner: No 46

Eye-witness's testimony: 'And then, as the colliery band belted out a Souza march, this ENORMOUS foot came down and stamped on him.' *(Chas F. Garvey, Peacehaven.)*

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INSIDE THE TALKS

The activist force meets the centrist object

Liberal negotiators **TONY GREAVES** *and* **RACHAEL PITCHFORD** *with the inside dope on the Alliance merger talks*

THE MERGER talks actually broke down at mid-day last Wednesday in the main committee room at the SDP's Cowley Street headquarters. Robert Maclennan came out of a meeting of the SDP team to tell the Liberals: 'It looks like it's all over, I'm afraid. I'm sorry.'

The three outstanding issues before the Joint Negotiating Team were the preamble of values and principles, the procedures for amending the constitution, and the new party's *name*! The negotiators had gone home without agreement at 2am earlier that morning after a nine-hour stint.

By noon after another two hours of discussion the deadlock had still not been broken. Liberal resolve was firm, for the first time throughout the weeks of talks. Just before the breakdown SDP negotiator John Grant had made a dramatic statement that he was withdrawing from the negotiations. One or two others looked set to join him and Maclennan withdrew his side for what had become known during the negotiations as a "time out". He returned to say it was all over.

The SDP side scattered to the winds while the Liberals went off for lunch before reconvening back at party HQ in the basement of the National Liberal Club. All hopes of meeting last Friday's deadline for writing the constitution seemed lost.

But more drama followed. The SDP team's secretary, Dick Newby, rang his Liberal counterpart Andrew Ellis from the restaurant where he was lunching with Maclennan. It appeared that Bob had looked into a future without a merger and decided he didn't like it. Could Dick and Andrew try to patch it all up that afternoon? By tea-time a Liberal "take it or leave it" package was on its way to Cowley Street in Ellis's pocket and 24 hours later Maclennan rather bizarrely announced from Brussels airport that the deal was on.

The draft constitutions are now published for consultation within the two parties, possible agreed amendments and approval or otherwise at the end of January conferences. In spite of the closing events in the saga the new structure owes more to the SDP than to the Liberal Party. And, as a negotiated document, it contains all kinds of oddities such as a mangled version of the Single Transferable Vote system in order to ensure the election of minimum quotas of women and men to various federal (i.e. national) committees.

The last three big issues reflected the quite different perceptions the two sides hold of the basic purposes of politics. On the name, the long title of "New Liberal and Social Democratic Party" was agreed fairly quickly: the word "new" is there because the SDP were adamant that "Liberal" must not come first! They also demanded a short title (Liberals weren't too bothered about having one) and soon made it clear that it must not include the word "Liberal" at all. The Liberals, urged on by their MPs, insisted that "Liberal" be included. But eventually they agreed on "the Alliance".

This apparently ridiculous impasse was caused by quite different views of the future. The Social Democrats look forward to something new, different, exciting — like the founding of the SDP. Liberals are quite clear that they will go on being Liberals ("till the day I die" said Alan Beith).

Votes for firesiders

The arguments over how the constitution could be changed in future reflected confusion over the nature of democracy. Shirley Williams expressed it as a conflict between activist democracy as practised by the Liberal Party and member democracy in the SDP. SDP attitudes are based on a concept of participation in which as many members as possible take part in discussions on policy, but in which the process of policy-making is centrally managed and actual decisions tightly controlled. The new structure includes a powerful central Policy Committee and the conference's powers are carefully circumscribed, to the extent of having "consultative" ballots *after* the conference has made a final decision — if the powers-that-be don't like that decision.

On the other hand, Liberal concerns with being able to hold the decision-makers in the party accountable have largely been cast aside. The opportunities for taking part in *deciding* things, whether policy, organisation or (crucially) campaigning, will be much reduced. The SDP side has throughout the talks been obsessed with the right of the leadership to appeal over the heads of "activists" to the fireside members when the going gets rough.

Liberals have stressed the importance of meetings for proper discussion of complex things, while agreeing that member ballots are vital for a few clear-cut and well-understood issues such as the election of the leader. This fundamental disagreement on the role of postal ballots and general meetings, and the nature of accountability in a representative democracy, has resulted in some odd compromises. For instance, postal votes will only be sent to members on request when parliamentary candidates are being selected; but local party officers and executive members will be elected by compulsory postal ballots in the three weeks following AGMs, a provision which most Liberals will find ridiculous.

Throughout the talks the SDPers have shown themselves to be frightened to death of a future in which their lives are substantially affected by Liberals (particularly "activists"). So there will be entrenched provisions for the first six months when the main national committees will be half ex-Liberal, half ex-SDP. Some 30 per cent of the new party, perhaps, with two out of 19 MPs and 10 per cent of local councillors will have half the say and an effective veto. But from next October they will only have their centralised party structure to rely on, founded on some 2,000 permanent "members" of conference, elected for two-year terms (four meetings). There is a real danger that Liberal activists will find they have no alternative but to capture a centralised machine which they never wanted.

Liberals have won elections by looking outwards to the community. Their party has sufficient internal democracy to prevent central committees and officers from doing foolish things — and sufficient pluralism to allow activists to do their own thing. The centres provide assistance and motivation and don't restrict.

The model now on offer is much more restricted and inward-looking. In order to protect their freedom to campaign, activists will have to spend much time and energy promoting their positions in the party. In addition the endless policy discussions written into the new constitution may leave no time for campaigning at all.

If this happens, the name and preamble of the new party won't matter. Liberals will still have the means to unscramble the constitutional mess, but it may take a decade. Is that what they want to spend the next ten years doing? □

Tony Greaves is a Liberal councillor in Pendle, and Rachael Pitchford is chair of the Young Liberals. Both are members of the Liberal negotiating team in the continuing Liberal-SDP merger talks.

"I'm afraid we're always full over the Christmas period"

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If you've got it, flaunt it . . .

It's been a bad time for the NHS but good for charity balls. Six in London in ten days.* YVONNE ROBERTS *sampled Thatcherite charity in action at the Gold Masked Ball and found that 'giving' just doesn't match up to 'getting and spending'

'DON'T YOU love it?' says one woman at the Gold Masked Ball; others may opt for eye coverage decorated like peacocks' backsides but she has removed the lenses of her Ray-Bans and decorated the frames with tinsel. The result is a cross between The Fonz and Edna Everage. 'A bohemian giver . . .' says a man in a metallic death mask.

It's been a bad fortnight for the National Health Service but a good one for charity balls. Six in London in ten days. Cancer, physical disabilities, leukaemia . . . One night can reap £30,000 and more, once raffles are organised and auctions conducted.

It soon becomes clear that this ball (masks available for £2 to £3 from Harrods, the rich woman's Boots), held at the Inter-Continental Hotel in Hyde Park, is a *serious* ball. Giving is an expensive business by the time clothes, hair and manicure have been fixed. And then, of course, there is the £40 for the tickets, so a little return on investment is required. 'Christ, it's Perrier,' says one man, unwrapping a raffle prize which looks very much like champagne. 'And it cost a tenner.'

In the reception area, the Gold Ball cocktail is being served — a mix of Gancia and some unidentified apricot liquid, it tastes like carbonated after-shave and the punters love it. A very tall, very round man in a gold lamé bow-tie, cummerbund and matching mask, zips through three like a gilt enamelled bumble bee discovering nectar for the first time. 'Could you get off my dress, actually?' says a fellow ball-goer, frostily. She, like many of the women present, resembles a glass of Guinness, dressed in black with a head of hair the uncanny colour of cream.

The clientele is 30-plus, not so much Hooray Henry as Flash Harry. These are Mrs Thatcher's favourite 'workers', in property and business, the equivalent of the affluent tradesmen in her much-beloved Victorian times. Physically and metaphorically, these are men grown fat — the beer belly of today's society — while the belt of Thatcher's austerity has squeezed so many others.

At the Naughty Nights Tree (£10 for a lucky dip and a prize for everyone), two models dressed in black underwear dish out tickets. 'No,' says one patiently, 'I'm not Page Three.' As a consolation price she offers, 'But I have been a Starbird.' Someone who might be the Michelin man dressed as the Lone Ranger buys a fourth ticket in a vain attempt to persuade Karen, one of the models, to agree to dinner. 'What business am I in?' he responds cheerfully to a question, 'Detergents. Selling to hotels and hospitals. That kind of thing . . .' A handmaiden of privatisation. Karen still says no.

If the guests, literally, lack that certain Class (no aristocracy, no Jennifer from *Harpers & Queen*, no pop stars) their money ensures they don't look Top Shop, either. Student nurse Rachel Jenings manoeuvres around the costume jewelry, selling raffle tickets at £10 for five. A man in an exhausted-looking bow-tie last seen on Barry Manilow at the Albert Hall can't resist the thrill of the marketplace. 'I've only got a fiver,' he says shamelessly. 'Can I have three?' Rachel stands firm. He probably earns more in one morning than she does in a month. 'Thank you very much,' she says sweetly. And gives him two. The business of charity has always been strong on irony — but never more so than now.

The ball, organised by an unquestionably hard-working group of women, led by Jane Burke, will raise money to buy essential equipment for the Westminster Children's Hospital. The hospital depends heavily on charity. Surrounded by glitz and generosity, still all I can see is the absurdity of the situation. Tonight's 'givers' solidly support a whole range of policies which deprive children, make them sick and which damage the NHS — then they raise money to make those children well enough to fall sick again. It's recycling gone mad.

> ***'The clientele is 30-plus, not so much Hooray Henry as Flash Harry . . . At the Naughty Nights Tree (£10 for a lucky dip and a prize for everyone), two models dressed in black underwear dish out tickets. "No," says one patiently, "I'm not Page Three." As a consolation prize she offers, "But I have been a Starbird"'***

At dinner, tables of 12 are thronged by waiters who make up a third world delegation. Slabs of meat, as thick as books, lie on silver salvers. The potatoes, 'Pommes Parisiennes', have been crafted into identical crumbed marbles, the only artisans in the 1980s being found in hotel kitchens. 'What kind of wine have you got?' asks a man of a Filipino waiter. 'French?' the waiter suggests hesitatingly. These workers are among Britain's eight million low paid. A barman manages to smile on, having worked 16 hours already. His basic take-home pay is £100 a week.

Inside the ballroom, at a stunningly decorated table, a man with a group of friends wields a cigar-cutter the size of a portable telephone and says he works in property, twelve hours a day, five days a week. 'Seven, darling,' says his wife in a candy floss pink dress. 'It's seven.' A colleague adds, smiling, 'And we still can't afford kids.' Strange, really, because they've never come cheaper.

A child's lot

One in three children now live on or near the poverty line. One million children make up part of the staggering 77 per cent increase in people living on supplementary benefit since 1979. The Black report in 1980, *Inequalities in Health*, found that children of parents on state benefits were twice as likely to die as those born into social class one. A more recent report by the now defunct Health Education Council repeated the message: poverty damages children's lives.

Today, mothers are forced to keep their children in one room in hotels in conditions under which they would normally be prosecuted for neglect. Today, children are being abused in their homes and social workers, who know it is happening, can do nothing because they are under-staffed and over-stretched. And there is more to come.

In April, when the Social Fund comes into force, a child's lot will be even harder. If they need clothes, for instance, their parents will now receive a loan which must be repaid out of supplementary benefit instead of a non-returnable grant; half a million children now eating free school meals will no longer be eligible. Child benefit is to be frozen. The government can squander £2.9 billion on privatisation, more than half the total spent on child benefit, but it can't afford an adequate safety net for the young. Back at the Inter-Continental, champagne at £40 a bottle is being swigged and Fascinating Aida are on stage.

Fascinating Aida, three women who write and perform their own songs, go into a routine which is muzak for the menopausal; social satire about as savage as a duck-down duvet. One of FA's many anthems to affluence has a line about '. . . We start the meal with tabouleh, taramasalata is so passé . . .' That gets a giggle. But the biggest laugh of all comes from a hard-hitting number about dinner parties, '. . . admitting to the hostess her dinner's a disgrace, by spitting out gristle in her husband's face . . .'

In the ladies' loo, a group of women appear to believe Fascinating Aida's repertoire is positively risqué, 'women's entertainment', like chat about the best kind of coil. 'I could feel the men at the table tense,' one says, conducting a conversation with herself in the mirror. 'Hi *girls*,' says another, possibly in her 40s, making a grand entrance. Instantly the lavatory feels like the pyjama party scene in *Grease*.

A lot of these women work, like Jane Burke who is a part-time solicitor. They obviously put an enormous effort into fund-raising on the basis of an exchange and mart philanthropy: you come to my ball and I'll go to yours. (One with a smile like Shirley Bassey complains that if she gives more than £3,000 to charity then she is taxed — a case of giving in order for the Inland Revenue to receive.)

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George Waud
wears a dinner suit,
£550, evening shirt, £65, bow tie, £10, handkerchief, £12, all from Turnbull & Asser, 71-72 Jermyn Street, SW1. Russian sable muff, £350, from Gale Furs, 65 Regent's Park Road, NW1. 'I am rich' brooch to order from Tom Binns, 30-31 Great Sutton Street, EC1. Cufflinks: Chanel. Earrings, £220, from a selection at Chanel, 26 Old Bond Street, W1. Rings by Kathryn Post, L.A. Dress gloves, £12, shoes, £69, all from Harkers as before
I AM RICH

The *charity* ball is the acceptable face of the new show-off rich. *Tatler* and *Harpers & Queen* are their noticeboards. Left: page from *Tatler* feature on the young, rich and beautiful

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There is a strange feel of the '50s about them all. Favourite topics in charity planning meetings, according to Jane Burke are 'diets, facelifts, men, that sort of thing . . .'

Still in the loo, a tall thin woman in a pleated gold dress that makes her look like an elegant accordion addresses a girlfriend, reconstituting her 'face'. 'Wonderful. Fab. Magic. We'll have lunch after Chrissie. No booze talk and all that.'

In the ballroom, a band zip through the obligatory '60s numbers playing to a standard which would hardly be acceptable on a Baltic cruiser but everyone is happy. 'If it's kids, I'll spend,' says a jovial man popping petit fours into his mouth like peanuts. He reckons he's 'shelled out' around £250 this evening.

Fractions

On the day of the ball , *The Standard* reports on the rewards possible from the property game. Nicholas Van Hoogstraten, 'one of the largest private landlords of residential and commercial property in East Sussex and West London' — who, as the paper also mentions, formerly served four years for helping to organise a hand-grenade attack and has been accused of harassment by tenants — is to build himself a new house. 'Tycoon's dream of a home,' is the breathless headline.

Van Hoogstraten's house will only cost him £4 million. That puts the ball into perspective. Even if it raises £50,000, that's no more than a fraction of a rake-off on one property deal. While no one would refuse a donation on the grounds it's not enough, the contribution of many charity ball givers is proportionately a smaller slice in terms of their income than, say, that given by an old age pensioner. And the OAP doesn't have any of the fun. 'The most generous people are the poorest,' says Wendy Riches, director of fund-raising at Save the Children. and they are also the most invisible.

In the reception area of the Masked Ball, a display provides a heart-rending frieze to the proceedings. It shows children who have received treatment for genetic diseases. £27,000 of the money raised (the remainder will be spent in the children's intensive care unit) will pay for a piece of machinery which should have been in operation in the hospital's bone marrow unit long ago. The machine screens blood for appropriate platelets and processes the marrow from non-perfectly matched volunteers to reduce the risks from a transplant. (Blood and marrow are desperately needed from volunteers.) Even charity, however, can't stop children dying because of government policy.

The bone marrow unit at Westminster Children's Hospital deals not with leukaemia but with 50 other previously fatal genetic deseases. A bone marrow transplant costs £16,000 and half of that cost is met by charity. 'If we don't give these children a transplant,' says Professor John Hobbs, director of the transplant unit and the department of immunonology, 'then they die a slow, miserable death, crippled, deaf, blind and demented. In the process of dying, they will probably cost the NHS around £100,000 and the experience has a profound effect on their families. If a transplant succeeds — and 55 children out of 95 have become superb survivors — then a child can lead a normal life.'

'At the exit from the Golden Masked Ball, a woman in a beautifully tailored long evening dress clutches a pink satin cock cover, shaped like an elephant's trunk with little beady eyes that wobble, won in the raffle. "We work bloody hard for our money. And if we do well, then so do the others . . . Hasn't it been a brill evening?"'

Professor Hobbs' unit has seven beds which require 36 paediatric nurses. The unit has only six nurses because of the poor wages (around £7,000, rising to £9,000 for a highly qualified nurse is utterly inadequate). As a result, only two beds can be used. Instead of 40 bone marrow transplants a year, 15 are being carried out. The waiting list holds the names of 50 children.

Scandalously, the unit has enough charity money to pay nurses above the odds but that is forbidden, so children die. Seventy children in the past two years have died in acute pain. 'Let our children grow tall,' said Mrs Thatcher in 1975, 'And some taller that others, if they have it in them to do so.' She couldn't be more apt.

A brill evening

At midnight, the auction begins. A man pays £300 for two tickets to an Eric Clapton concert; Paul Bloomfield on table 19 pays £750 for an 'original hand-written deed', dated 1848 and concerning rent of £31 6s 3d for a folly in Bath. Paul Bloomfield who resembles a rather plump Milky Bar kid, refers all inquiries to a sidekick. The sidekick grabs my notebook and writes down, painstakingly, a company name. 'Don't you know who he is? He's a very important man. The most important man.' The name he writes is Mountleigh PLC, famed for Paternoster Square and trying to buy Conran; hustlers of the 1980s.

The sidekick suddenly changes his mind, grabs the notebook and tears out a page. It must be subtle touches like these which make a tenant feel really wanted: roll on the days of the private landlord.

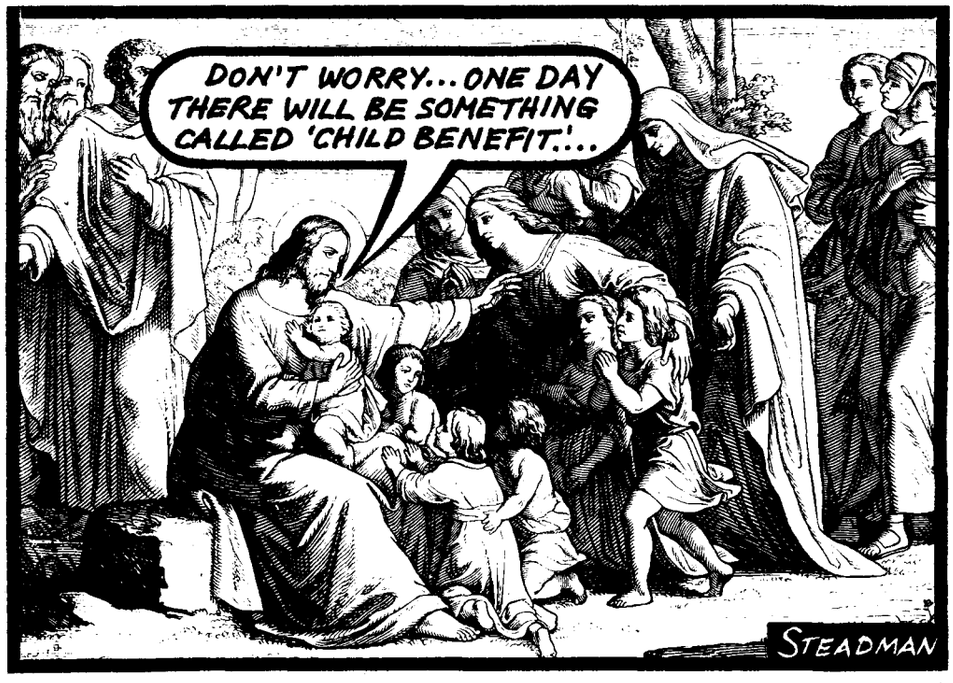
'The rich admire the poor less and less,' wrote Ferdinand Mount in 1982, then an adviser to Mrs Thatcher on the family, 'partly because the poor are not as poor as they used to be — but also because the poor fritter their money on such trash, video cassettes and cars with fluffy dice that joggle in the back window.'

At the exit from the Golden Masked Ball, a woman in a beautifully tailored long evening dress clutches a pink satin cock cover, shaped like an elephant's trunk with little beady eyes which wobble, won in the raffle. 'We work bloody hard for our money. And if we do well, then so do the others,' she says emphatically.

But of course, it hasn't worked out like that at all. In the eight years since Mrs Thatcher came to power, the lowest paid have had cuts of up to 20 per cent of their income while, on average, the richest earners have had increases of at least 8 per cent.

'Well,' says the woman, 'anybody can make statistics say anything.'

Traditional Tories saw charity as a duty, laid on them by their privilege. For Thatcherites, charity is an extension of *Dallas*, an economic opportunity to dazzle and display. 'Hasn't it been a brill evening?' says the woman, as she says her goodbyes. □



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Katalin Arkell/Network

HOMELESSNESS

Welcome to Cardboard City

Upstairs, in the warm, two make-believe tramps endlessly wait for Godot; downstairs, in the cold, real ones are waiting for soup.* JOHN SWEENEY *waits with them

IN THE OPEN-TO-THE-WIND concrete crypt of London's South Bank the cold is bitter, horrible; it burns like acid on the skin. As Estragon and Vladimir perplex at the Lyttleton Theatre, flautists pipe at the Royal Festival Hall and film buffs stream from the back exit of the National Film Theatre, a crowd of 20 to 30 men stamp their feet, blow into their hands and wander to and fro. The film-goers gawk at the wanderers, who take care not to notice, and keep apart from each other, so as not to register that they have something in common — they're all waiting for soup.

Pitifully vivid in the stark glare of an overhead security light is a green blanket which has taken human form and is shuddering uncontrollably; by the blanket's fringe lies a jaunty blue blazer with gold buttons, perfect dress for the Rotary Club but piercingly pathetic here, on the hard concrete ground patchworked with puddles of stinking, green piss. But the shuddering thing in the blanket is not purposeless; it too is waiting for soup.

Away from the glare a terraced street of cardboard-fronted hutches distinguishes itself in the gloom: Welcome to Cardboard City. Not dogs, not pigs, but people live here. Some of the hutch-dwellers are trying to sleep, but it can't be easy, with the cold and the clanking of the trains, the screech of car alarms and the wood-on-concrete clatter of the fanatic skateboarders, weaving and dodging only feet away. The racket is worsened by three bawling kids, in the tow of a woman who says she is looking for her husband: "He's got my child benefit card. He sometimes comes here for the soup."

Inside one empty box, the owner has patriotically stuck up a colour photograph of the Queen on horseback; it would look ordinary in a Home Counties saloon bar amidst the horse brasses, but here it screams blasphemously, a weird echo of straight-laced domesticity. On the front of another hutch, a house-proud owner has scrawled "The Boss Taff Says Keep Out". Behind a third, a candle flickers underneath the sloping roof, the light of which illuminates "Elvis" drawn on the side of a cardboard coffin-bed, and, alive but terrifyingly motionless, a bearded man, whose face remains as still as an icon even when our eyes meet.

Suddenly, the City bursts into energy with the arrival of the first soup wagon. It's like one of those ads on the telly where as soon as someone pours a noxious fizzy drink the party comes to life. The hutch-dwellers emerge, more men appear from nowhere hurrying hungrily to the van, even the shudder casts off the green blanket and shows itself to be Sophie, the only bag lady present, who casts an almost completely round, tragi-comical shadow with the clothes-on-clothes she wears to dull the cold. Filthy-faced, she mutters mad words and darts suspicious glances all around her while drinking her soup from a toy bucket. Sophie is the worst case: wretchedness with a capital W.

The soup is worth waiting for, though it feels odd, and rather disturbing, that the young woman volunteer from the Bondway Hostel pours it out without giving me a second glance. But then, why should she? Many of the men look better dressed than I do. It's good, thick stuff with bits of veg and chunks of unpeeled potato to chew on. It warms the hands through the white styrofoam cups, which hurts, as they had quietly lost their feeling with the cold.

Empty cups

The soup breathes warmth into the men, who start talking and joking and tossing the empty cups at each other. A new knot of men swirl round a volunteer who is doling out sandwiches from a black plastic rubbish bag; soon the volunteer walks away, leaving the men to jostle and shove and good-humouredly cuss for food.

With the soup the wanderers peel off their anonymity and become human and different. Labels like tramps, dossers, even the prissy "gentlemen of the road", don't stick so neatly to

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Roger Hutchings/Network

Pathetic, mainly unlikeable, often foul-smelling and mind-twisted, but *human* beings

individuals. Dave, a tiny but irrepressibly sparky, bespectacled Scot wearing a bright yellow anorak with "Murphy" written over his prominent hunchback, part of a group of five respectably-dressed Scottish blokes who were "skippering" (sleeping rough) by Blackfriars Bridge. A slightly menacing ginger-haired skinhead wearing bobble cap, combat jacket and jeans; who would have thought this neat-looking tough lived in a cardboard hutch?

And what about these two, discussing God and Mrs Gorbachev with dry, donnish wit? Tom Maher, aged 49, an immaculately dressed, intensely religious yet droll London University graduate (Soviet economic studies), whose devotion to the Virgin Mary led him to live with the dossers in Lincoln's Inn and Sarath, a ragglе-taggle-haired, bushy-bearded Singhalese, bright-eyed and startlingly articulate, the one black tramp present. "I lost my job about a year ago." He agreed that there are very few Asian or West Indian tramps around, but denied that he came up against much extra unpleasantness because he was black. "It's the same as normal life, I suppose," he said, with laughing eyes, before heading off to Oxford Street, in search of a warm shopfront.

The Bondway van drove off, to be replaced moments later, hilariously too soon, by a wagon carrying a handful of cherubic waist-haired women and sparsely bearded seraphim, all smiling stick-on "He is with you" smiles: a Christian group from the University of London. Palates were a bit jaded by now, but their soup was dutifully downed and, a few sulphurous looks apart, no one tweaked the angels' wings.

The students departed not long afterwards, leaving half-eaten loaves of bread and the concrete speckled with crushed styrofoam. One of the Scots charitably said that last week the students had been great: "There was a bloody good sing-song and dancing and all." Sophie disappeared underneath a gaudily-decorated plastic-covered walkway which led to the Artistes Entrance. Only a few years ago home might have been some dark, window-barred psychiatric unit; there Sophie would perhaps have been pumped full of liquid cosh, but at least she would have been warm.

There is some fancy multi-million-pound scheme to develop the South Bank which will mean the end of Cardboard City in a few years' time. Or rather it won't. They will just pick up their cardboard and walk, to find somewhere else, like Lincoln's Inn Fields. I gave Tom Maher a lift to his "home" there, during which we discussed a joint acquaintance, an LSE lecturer whose barbed wit Tom put down to disappointments in sex life. It was an eerily normal conversation to have with someone who sleeps rough.

After midnight, underneath the full moon, the bandstand in the middle of the lawyers' park is a beer-can strewn necropolis, full of near-corpses, the only sign of life the glowing red pinpoint of a fag end, gleaming dully from beneath plastic sheeting thrown over a bench. Lincoln's Inn is fabled as the place for the hard men, the lads who drink "jake" or surgical spirit.

Family viewing

Suddenly, the area by the tennis courts is lit as day: a seven-strong team from the BBC are interviewing Ratso in his box for a documentary about the homeless which will be shown sometime in the New Year. Ratso is the Peter Bruinvels of the skippering world, ever ready with a quote. Even so producer Louise Panton was having a hard time coaxing the right family-viewing sync from him.

"Are you a wind-up merchant Ratso?" "Are you the producer?" "Yes." "Well, if you're the fucking producer prove it."

Ms Panton saw me scribbling and pulled a face: "I'd rather you didn't." On learning that I was from the *New Statesman*, Ratso, who prefers the *Spectator*, picked up her tone and started screaming "fucking commie bastard". I walked away, muttering to myself, Sophie-style.

Noisily getting ready for "bed" by sorting out boxes from a pile of rubbish were two dossers, Tony from Cardiff and a blotchety-nosed Londoner. They were both mind-bendingly drunk, but Tony was in slightly better shape: "I'm just a piss-head, but he's a fucking alcoholic." The Londoner threatened me casually: "Are you a fucking poof? I'll fucking kill you." Dossers can be violent but that night Tony and his mate were just making small talk. A moment later the Cockney offered me a cigarette. The company of dossers is usually more comradely and convivial than that of, say, television producers. And dossers can be heroes too. Tom Maher's life was saved during the London hurricane when another dosser, Leo Manin, warned him not to move. An instant later Leo was crushed by a tree. Tom organised a requiem mass for him.

Tony also slept out on the night of the Great Storm. "All I can remember is being bloody annoyed because my plastic sheeting was blown away and I had to go and run after it." Over another cup of soup (the Bondway van had appeared), he told his story. In his time, Tony has waited table on judges at great legal banquets. How come he's a dosser? "Drink."

According to Dr John Balaza, a GP who specialises in treating the homeless in the East End, drink and psychiatric problems afflict more than two-thirds of his mainly male, often Scottish and Irish, patients. "It's easier to medicalise the problem than to work it out. Underlying everything is poverty. We can help a few people very much, but for the majority we can do next to nothing."

One of the Bondway volunteer soup-dispensers agrees with this realistic but depressing outlook. Ruth Yearley, the woman who poured the soup at the South Bank, works by day for a marketing firm which handles the Sunsilk hairspray account. "I don't kid myself. I've got all the yuppie trappings, apart from a compact disc player. This is just scratching the surface." What do the people at work think? "They don't know."

Not knowing and not wanting to know is a more common response to these pathetic, mainly unlikeable, often foul-smelling and mind-twisted but *human* beings. Hands up who knew that 1987 was the International Year for the Single Homeless? Perhaps society, even this government, will begin to take notice as the crowd of homeless grows to become an embarrassment. According to one senior worker with the homeless in central London things are going to get much worse before they get better.

As well as the government's long-term policy to close old, unfashionable psychiatric units and put people out into 'the community' — even if the consequences for people like Sophie are grim — the centrally-heated whizz-kids in Westminster and Whitehall have come up with two new schemes which will push the numbers of homeless up. The first comes into effect on 11 April when people on supplementary benefit will have to wait two weeks before a claim will be paid: few landlords will take people in with no deposit.

The second is the poll tax, which will drive many young people who are old enough to vote but can't find work out on to the streets. No doubt when the various factors come into play and the number of homeless begging on the streets becomes unsightly, compassion will be dusted off. Meanwhile, our homeless suffer cruelly.

Last word to Arthur Wallace, a 66-year-old homeless Glaswegian ex-labourer, who was sheltering from the cold and hiding from the security men in a dark recess of the Lyttleton Theatre cafe at the National. Clean-shaven (for his brush-up he goes to the Leicester Square all-night toilets at four o'clock in the morning), neatly clothed with long white hair swept back, Arthur looked like a twin of the very first Dr Who. He hadn't slept for three days or eaten for one. Because he'd lost his teeth Arthur rolled the tuna sandwiches the *New Statesman* bought him into little balls, before popping them into his mouth. He got more satisfaction from the food than any person for whom I have ever bought a meal.

"You feel that you are not wanted, eh? I always try to keep myself respectable, but it's not very easy. What gets to me is when you see people hurrying home on a night like this, and you've no home to go to. It makes you think." □

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SUMMIT

The eclipse of Europe

Militarists in the US want to make NATO more European, less American, but, warns* RICHARD FALK, *they want to keep Europe divided at the Elbe rather than an autonomous peace zone

New Jersey

NEVER HAS THERE been a summit quite like this one. In the background of Gorbachev's presence, the signing of the INF treaty, the shift in Reagan's tone, and the overwhelmingly positive reaction of the American people possibly represent an enduring change in the course of modern international relations that will be long remembered and often reassessed. Partly, there is a suppressed wish evident here for an end to the Cold War, and a sense of relief that an apparently friendly Soviet Union no longer poses a threat, allowing us all to sleep easier in the nuclear age. Of course, it may take a decade to determine whether this was truly an historic week, or merely one more example of deep immersion in "atmospherics", as public relations orchestrations are now known.

The INF agreement itself became a prop in the hands of the leaders more than an intrinsic step toward European nuclear disarmament. The treaty has been easy to present as an acceptable bargain. After all, the Soviets have agreed to scrap 1752 medium-and short-range missiles as against 859 by the United States, and it was Washington that limited the rigour of the verification arrangements, not Moscow. Although the mainstream in America hails the treaty, in part, because it sets a precedent for "disproportionate reductions", it seems evident that if an American president had been on the short end of the numbers he would face impeachment, if not allegations of treason. We treat a disproportion in reductions as natural and reasonable only because the extra burden is placed on the Soviet side. So in the background of this courtship, at least so far, has been a forthcoming Gorbachev and a coy, but not wholly unresponsive Reagan, or is it indeed "the Nancy factor" that accounts for receptivity at the White House? Nancy Reagan, it is widely said, wants her husband to earn a place in history, and he can only do this by cutting his ties to the radical right and graciously accepting the Gorbachev offering.

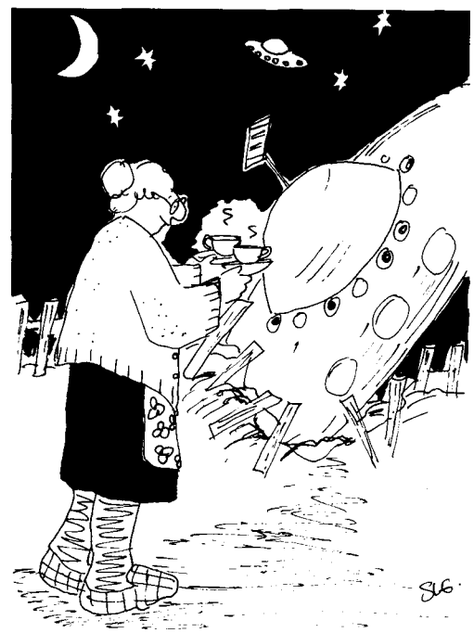
Or, more sinisterly, is it a matter of gaining the protective colouring of arms control to enable an all-out push on Star Wars (the so-called Strategic Defense Initiative, or SDI)? Often before, arms control steps have accompanied, rather than inhibited, escalations in the qualitative arms race. Never before has a qualitative leap seemed so expensive and dangerous as the leap into space envisaged by SDI. If the summit and its INF agreement make such a leap easier, then the agreement, while valuable on its own, may not contribute much overall. Reading the American scene, such a concern by some Senate centrists — for instance, Senator Sam Nunn — leads him, possibly unwisely, to put obstacles in the INF path as a way to hinder progress on SDI.

The European dimension of these developments is obscure and secondary at this stage. The big preoccupation in the United States is whether this INF treaty can be seen as a signal of the end of the Cold War, and indeed of the postwar world which began some four decades ago. Most sophisticated Americans, including the influential media, are putting the brakes on such expectations. Never has the Soviet plight of suppressed nationalities or dissidents received so much publicity, and never has the American identification with a call for Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan been so strident.

One-way street

Such posturing — in a sense itself an aspect of the Cold War — has included a remarkably consistent failure to consider what might be done to cut back on American provocations in Central America and the Persian Gulf. While the neo-conservatives are lecturing the Reagan people on the need for linkage (no arms control without Soviet concessions on human rights and Afghanistan) the actual frame of superpower diplomacy has let the United States completely off the hook ... perhaps a precedent for "disproportionate diplomacy", or linkage as a one-way street. It makes you wonder whether the Kremlin is desperate, or possibly whether, more hopefully, Soviet leaders have grasped the uniqueness of the nuclear age where the traditional issues of parity and arithmetic equivalence are obsolete, and assuredly subordinate to reducing the risks and costs of the nuclear arms race.

Despite the regional character of the INF treaty, Europe has been definitely pushed into the background, and it is this confirmation of the marginality of Europe that should be the occasion of special concern for Europeans. The debate here is about the superpower connections with one another, about whether Gorbachev is sincere,



whether he can pull off reforms at home, and about whether the capitalist West can risk the uncertainty of a world without an arms race.

Europe is mentioned, of course, but usually as a rhetorical reference in the larger debate on superpower intentions and interests. There are those who argue that this December summit together with the Helsinksi Accords removes Europe as a conflict zone, and frees the United States to turn westwards and meet what is now certainly its primary challenge, Japan and the future of the Pacific. Others say that removing the intermediate and short-range missiles from Europe will undo the damage to the political infrastructure of NATO that was done by the popular movement of protest set off by Pershing II/cruise deployments, as well as the supposedly utopian image of a world without nuclear weapons that burst forth for an instant from the Reykjavik summit of a year ago. From this perspective, the INF agreement restores, rather than transforms, the postwar world, removing the missiles that agitate the West European public and placing confidence once again in a form of deterrence that accepts the division of Europe as a constant.

In the background, also, are some deep economic factors. During the festivities surrounding the Gorbachev visit came news of the worst quarterly trade deficit ever for the United States, more than $17 billion. It is widely accepted that the Soviet economy is confronting its deepest crisis, and the Yeltsin affair, however overblown by those eager to put a damper on the US/USSR thaw, does suggest that *perestroika* and *glasnost* will be severely tested at every stage, no matter how great Gorbachev's prestige.

In the end, the flow of events for Europe and superpower relations will be shaped by subsequent developments. If the Soviets do get out of Afghanistan, and Vietnam gets out of Cambodia, the diplomatic momentum will be sustained for further de-nuclearising steps. It will make the task of those in the United States who seem intent on obstructing the INF treaty much more difficult.

It is too soon to tell what is likely to happen. In the short run, the United States will press the Europeans to spend more on military aspects of security, to treat the INF arrangements as no more than a managerial subtlety that does nothing to alter the basic shape of European tensions. Over time, the militarists in the United States, mainly for budgetary reasons, would like to make NATO more European, less American, but with no alteration of geopolitical mood, and above all no serious development of Europe as a unified region, a zone of peace and autonomy. The Soviet Union, also, seems not ready to let go of a divided Europe, partly for fear of what might happen in Eastern Europe, yet mainly because of abiding anxieties over the future of Germany, especially the haunting spectre of a reunified, nuclear Germany rising out of the ashes of the Cold War.

Europe itself needs to enter into the process of this dialogue, not by way of passive reaction or imputed concerns, but in the form of conceiving of its own security and future as an independent goal. It may not be too early to call for a Congress of Vienna devoted to the prospects for Europe in the next century at which all European governments are invited to participate, but neither superpower. □

The author is Professor of International Law at Princeton University.

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BONG BONG BONG BONG BONG BONG BONG BONG BONG BONG BONG BONG BONG BONG
Westenders
A TEMPERANCE CLASSIC FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON
THIS IS A WORLD WHERE EVERYDAY DRAMAS UNFOLD; A WORLD WHERE EVERYONE IS GETTING UP AND GETTING ON; A WORLD WHERE DECISIONS ARE TAKEN IN THEORY BUT NOT IN PRACTICE; A WORLD WHERE FORM TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER CONTENT; A WORLD ABOVE ALL WHERE WORDS ARE CHEAP AND BOOZE IS SUBSIDISED....
HE'S GOT FLARES ON!
HE HASN'T GOT A TIE!!!!
BOR-RING!!
BOR-RING!
DID YOU WRITE THAT YOURSELF?
I NAME THE HON. MEMBER "MISTER SECURITY RISK OF NINETEEN EIGHTY SEVEN"
WARP FACTOR SIX, SULU..
IS THE SPEAKER AWARE THAT THERE IS A NEW BAR OPENING HERE TONIGHT?
A WORLD WHERE.....??
HONK! BAN PERMISSIVE HOMOSEXUAL PRACTICES NOW!!
WHAT? HERE IN THE PALACE? IS THE HONOURABLE MEMBER KIDDING ME? ARE THERE NOT ALREADY SEVENTY FIVE BARS AND THIRTY NINE FRANCHISED RESTAURANTS??
FUN!
FUN!
HOW DOES THE HON. MEMBER EXPECT ME TO KEEP THIS BUNCH OF HONOURABLE+LEARNED COMPOTATORS* IN ORDER IF THEY KEEP OPENING BARS EVERYWHERE???
RESERVE ME A LARGE HOUSE OF COMMONS AND TONIC, LIONEL
HOLDING WARP SIX, MR. SPEAKER
*PARLIAMENTARY HOPHEADS
I KNOW IT'S ONLY YOU ME AND DOGFACE, BUT WE'RE REALLY GONNA MAKE A GO OF IT THIS TIME, AIN'T WE?
JUST GIT ON WITH IT!
Dirty Death's BAR
IT CAN'T FAIL – I'M IN CHARGE. NOBODY TELLS ME NOTHIN' ABAHT RUNNIN' BARS. I RUNNED "FOREIGNERS" BAR. THAT'S THE BIGGEST, FLASHEST BAR IN THE ENTIRE 'OUSE! I'VE 'AD 'EM ALL OVER THE COUNTER IN MY TIME...
SHUT YER BLOODY MOANIN', GEL!
YEAH, BUT THAT WAS TEN YEARS AGO, REMEMBER...
WHAD'YOU MEAN? I THOUGHT WE 'AD SOMETHIN' SP...
STOP GIVIN' ME EAR'OLE AN' START THINKIN' ABAHT YER IMAGE!

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CAPSTAN FULL STRENGTH
FOSTERS LAGER
NYAAAA!! DRAINPIPES! DRAINPIPES!!
PAVEMENT TAX
RATIONAL ALTERNATIVE TO PETROL LEV
TESTS FOR LESBIANISM AT 7.9 13
CAMPAIGN FOR REAL BLOOD SPORTS
'ERE, DAD - THEY KEEP TAKIN' THE MICKEY OUTA ME THREADS!! LEND US YER SHOOTER!!
WHERE'D YOU GET THOSE BLOODY TROUSERS FROM, BOY?? YOU DIDN'T GET 'EM FROM THIS BARROW THAT'S A BLOODY CERT!!
GRAVITAS SUITINGS
GUARANTEED FREE OF OFFENSIVE OR EXTREME MATERIAL
STYLES CONSTANTLY UNDER REVIEW
I'M GOIN' — YOU EGO-MAD HEARTLESS BASTARD!
GIMME A LARGE CUP OF TEA AND A STICKY BUN!!
THIS IS THE STRANGERS BAR, LADDIE! TRY THE TEA ROOM!!
A HOUSE OF COMMONS AND COKE AND TWENTY HOUSE OF COMMONS KING SIZE, PLEASE
I'M A STRANGER! WHAT'RE YOU HAVIN?
SORRY MADAM, WE ONLY SERVE STRANGERS HERE!
— MENU —
CANADA'A' HOUSE OF COMMONS
PUT THAT LIGHT OUT!
BAR & GRILL
LOUNGE
NO RUNNING ON THIS CORRIDOR!
I HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE YOU ARE CONCEALING AN UNDERAGE STRANGER ABOUT YOUR PERSON!
MI5 SUITE
©Steve Bell 1987
I'VE GOT THE BACKUP JOHN'S GOT THE FINANCE... I'M OPENIN' ANOTHER ONE - THASSRIGHT — 'OUSER LORDS — NEXT FRIDAY!!
ARE YOU GOING TO CHANGE THOSE TROUSERS, OR DO I HAVE TO DRAG THEM OFF YOU?!!
LEAVE ME ALONE, DAD!
GO EASY, NEIL!
THAT'S WONDERFUL NEWS!! - BUT WHAT ABOUT THE CAR??
'ABEAS CORPUS BIN GIVIN' US A BIT O' BOTHER - WE NEED A NEW BILL BILL, DOUG!
WE THINK YOU'LL LIKE THIS ONE
...A WORLD WHERE RUMOUR IS RAMPANT AND GOSSIP IS GOD; A WORLD WHERE THERE ARE FEW WOMEN, NO CHILDREN AND ONE ANIMAL; A WORLD WHERE YOU CAN REPEAT PHRASES LIKE "A WORLD WHERE" UNTIL YOUR MOUTH SEIZES UP; A WORLD OF WIND AND YELLOWISH LIQUID; A WORLD OF IT'S OWN.
ORDER! ORDER!! I NAME THOSE TROUSERS! I'M ORDERING THEM OUT OF THE CHAMBER!
HO HO HO!!!
MANY THANKS TO ALAN TRAVIS, PATRICK WINTOUR AND TO JIM NAUGHTIE FOR THE THE —
TO BE CONTINUED.....

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Thatcherism: the unfinished jigsaw

Three of the sharpest pens in politics analyse the prospects for each of the three (or four) big parties in Britain: Peter Kellner on the Tories, David Marquand on the strange jigsaw pieces in the middle, Ben Pimlott on Labour. First,* PETER KELLNER *asks if 'Thatcherism' has a unifying theory

HERE IS a Christmas question to bite into when you are fed up with mince pies, defective toys and obscure seasonal quizzes. Does Thatcherism have an OBE?

Note: Thatcher*ism* — not just the lady herself; and I am not referring to the honour of becoming an officer of the Order of the British Empire. By "OBE" I mean "one big explanation". Is there some unifying theory of Thatcherism? Can the component parts of her two-and-a-bit administrations be assembled, like an interlocking jigsaw puzzle, into an internally consistent design?

A series of books and academic articles have recently addressed parts of this question, though sometimes like doing the easy bits of a jigsaw puzzle: linking the pieces with straight edges together and leaving the rest for another time. Even so, a sort of haphazard consensus is emerging that Thatcherism does *not* have an OBE, and that its contradictions are more significant than its consistency.

Some of the more telling contradictions emerge from Peter Jenkins's account: *Mrs Thatcher's Revolution: The Ending of the Socialist Era* (Cape £12.95).

○ She hates the public sector, believing it to be instrinsically incompetent and inefficient. Yet the single most triumphant episode of the lady's reign so far has been the Falklands War. Whatever the merits of fighting it (or the blame to be attached for letting it start), the task force demonstrated the capacity of a public sector monopoly to plan, take risks and motivate its employees.

○ She says she wants to disperse power from Whitehall; but in every move she has made on the local administration of public services — rate-capping, poll tax, core curriculum, university funding, abolition of metropolitan counties, and so on — she has increased Whitehall's powers.

○ She says she believes in competition, but did nothing to break up British Telecom, British Gas or British Airways when these were sold to private shareholders.

○ She opposes high taxation and rapid money supply growth. Yet this government has taken a higher share of national output in taxation than any other in peacetime, and money supply has grown faster than ever before.

Peter Jenkins believes that despite these contradictions, the pieces nevertheless fit together. Mrs Thatcher, "more powerfully than anyone else, has articulated the moral doubts and yearnings of her age. For what people wanted, surely, was an end to decline, release from the corrosive sense of failure, a government which governed, and a country to begin to be proud of once again".

It's that "surely" which gives the game away. The truth is so self-evident that it does not require evidence, let alone proof. The trouble is that it is far from clear that what Jenkins asserts is true. With some notable exceptions (such as trade union legislation and council house sales, which have always had widespread public acceptance), there is precious little evidence that the public ever identified either with Mrs Thatcher's prescriptions or her remedies.

British Social Attitudes: the 1987 report (Gower £12.50) is the fourth in an annual series of detailed surveys of public opinion as it really is, and not just as politicians and commentators think it "surely" must be. In this year's report John Curtice marshals the evidence and concludes: "The Thatcher policy revolution has simply *not* so far been accompanied by an equivalent revolution in public attitudes."

For example, most people want more spent on the welfare state, think the unemployed get a raw deal and believe the government has a responsibility to reduce the gap between rich and poor. According to Curtice, "the 1980s may be the decade of Mrs Thatcher but it has not so far been a decade of popular 'Thatcherism'."

So: if Thatcherism is infested with contradictions and if some of its most elemental notions are rejected by the electorate, why does the term have such force? No other prime minister in recent times has had their name elevated by a suffix into a quasi-theoretical concept. Nobody ever talked about Callaghanism or Heathism or even Churchillism. There was the adjective "Wilsonian", but that was a term of abuse, sometimes tinged with envy. "Thatcherism" is a term that is proving remarkably durable; it must mean something.

An article in the autumn edition of *LSE Quarterly* (Blackwell; £4.45, or £17.50 annual subscription) by Julian Le Grand provides an original class analysis of part of Thatcherism: class analysis in the electoral rather than marxist sense.

Le Grand sets out to ask whether the rise in welfare spending since 1979 is simply a product of higher unemployment, or whether some other

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political project has been undertaken as well. The kernel of his argument is that welfare spending was redirected during the 1979 parliament in a way that specifically helped the middle classes:

> The services which showed an increase in expenditure per unit of need [in real terms] were age- and child-related benefits, the NHS and most sectors of education — all services in which the middle class have a substantial stake. The services which showed a decrease were housing, income- and unemployment-related benefits and personal social services — in most of which the middle class have less of a stake, if any at all.

As Le Grand admits, the fit is not perfect. Child benefit is to be held constant in money terms next year. On the other hand, the poll tax is something that will clearly help the better off relative to the poor; and the decision to charge for dental and eye tests will bear most severely on the worst off.

Set in the wider context of the rich/poor, north/south/city/suburb divides, it is possible to glimpse a pattern in the "contradictions" of Thatcherism. Peter Jenkins is — surely! — near the mark when he writes that "the 'Thatcher Revolution' is, perhaps, half a revolution. It is a revolution in half of Britain".

If that is right, then Thatcherism is *inevitably* contradictory. Any general theory of the phenomenon would have to apply to Britain as a whole.

If the government were, for example, to apply laissez-faire principles consistently, then the middle classes would have to stand, unprotected, on their own feet along with everyone else. If, on the other hand, it were consistently authoritarian, it would not have reduced the number of civil servants by more than 100,000, or sold major public companies to private shareholders.

An extremely clear account of the different theoretical strands to both "New Right liberal minimalism" and "conservative activism" is provided by Desmond King in *The New Right* (Macmillan £7.95). He writes that "the theoretical contradiction [between the two] has never been resolved intellectually, but its success electorally and programatically is sufficient for the government". It is easy to take that observation and conclude that Thatcherism is a theoretical con-trick — that, in practice, it amounts to little more than a series of electoral expedients, glossily wrapped in rhetoric about freedom.

There is an alternative view: that Thatcherism is neither consistent nor an intellectual pantomime horse. Of course it is full of contradictions, but these are neither random nor stupid. They have a logic of their own. To take an example: it might not be *consistent* to say that public spending should be reduced, and at the same time to spend more than ever before on mortgage tax relief; but it is *logical*. Both theory and practice are directed at sustaining Conservative support.

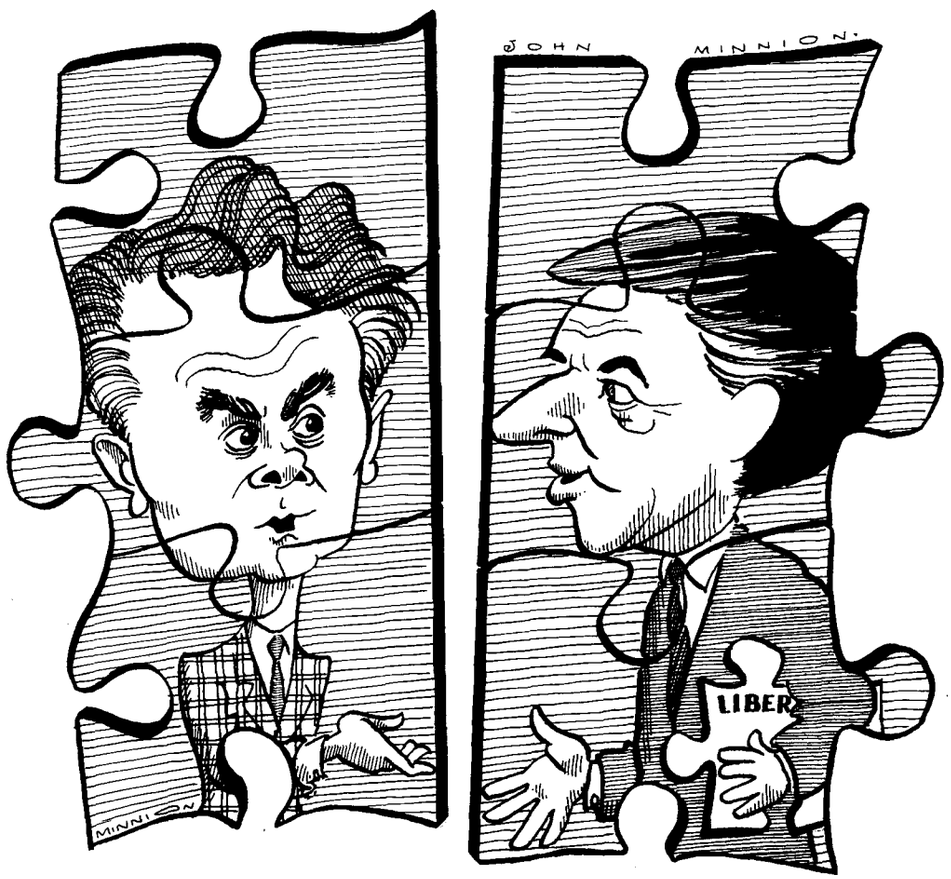
At a more general level, Thatcherism should be seen not as an experiment carried out in a kind of vast social laboratory, putting Hayekian or Friedmanite principles into practice; instead it should be judged as a political exercise: the acquisition, use and maintenance of power. It is then beside the point whether or not any two policies are intellectually consistent with each other. The point, rather, is whether both policies advance the political interests of the government. To keep mortgage tax relief might be intellectually indefensible and economically irresponsible: but it is politically inevitable.

In a sense, all governmental politics everywhere at all times are about the use and maintenance of power. The distinguishing feature about Thatcherism, I believe, is not just its unique success in winning three elections in a row: the term "Thatcherism" was well-established by 1981 when she had been in power only two years and the Tories were running third in the opinion polls. The reason why the Prime Minister deserves her *ism* is that she has devoted her energies single-mindedly to the creation of a society in which a permanent majority have a vested interest in the continuation of Tory rule. The minority may suffer, but as long as they remain a minority, they remain powerless.

Thatcherism's supporters, naturally, would not put it that way; its detractors, conversely, are sometimes loath to admit that there is any substantial logic or skill to what the Prime Minister has done at all. Is it not time to concede that she is probably the most formidable politician of our time, even if we detest what she is doing? One final thought before wrapping the Christmas presents: would that point have been more obvious to more people sooner had Mrs Thatcher been a man? □

ALLIANCE

Succeeding where the Alliance failed



The merged SDP/Liberal party must tap both its traditions, says* DAVID MARQUAND *— and appeal to an electorate dissatisfied with both labourism and neo-liberalism

FOR THE BEST PART of three months, the Alliance parties have been in a state of suspended animation. Against such a background, low opinion poll ratings are hardly a matter for surprise. Ordinary voters have been bored to tears by the arcane meta-politics around which the merger negotiations have necessarily revolved. They were not only bored, but repelled, by the unintelligible yet sulphurous SDP split which preceded them. Given all this, it would be a miracle if the Alliance had held on to its general election level of support. The interesting question is not why it has lost ground since the general election, but how much ground it can gain once the new merged party is in existence and the meta-politics give way to real ones. ▷

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It has three important assets, the first, least obvious and most paradoxical is the self-immolation of David Owen. To be sure, Owen's pre-election services to the Alliance were, on one level, second to none. His dynamism, energy, air of authority and nose for intellectual fashion gave him an appeal to the chattering classes which no other Alliance leader could match; some (though by no means all) of that appeal rubbed off on the rest of the Alliance as well. With him on board, part of it, at any rate, could speak in the authentic accents of Mrs Thatcher's England. Where the pre-Alliance Liberals and the Jenkinsite SDP were irredeemably unfashionable, redolent in the one case of earnest provincial nonconformity and in the other of a kind of born-again Fabianism, the Owenite Social Democrats could plausibly present themselves as the party of the clean-cut thrusters who were saving the country from sloppiness and corporatism: as the party, in other words, of the thoughtful yuppy.

Thoughtful yuppies may not be thick on the ground, but they do exist; and in Mrs Thatcher's England they have influence out of proportion to their numbers. (In the rest of Britain, they are poison, but Mrs Thatcher's England does not know much about the rest of Britain.) Owen's ability to speak to them was worth a great deal in the television studios, and worth something even in the ballot box. The trouble was that the dowry he brought his partners had to be paid for; and that the price turned out to be exorbitant.

Most of the Alliance was, and is, social liberal in ethos. That tradition, as has now become clear, has always been anathema to Owen. He detests social liberalism and he detests the progressive intelligentsia whose child it was even more. So long as he was at the top of it, the Alliance was bound to be wracked by personal and institutional tensions. More important still, it was unable to develop and articulate a coherent social liberal philosophy in the idiom of the 1980s. As he frequently complained, what it did instead was to fudge. The irony was that it did so in order to accommodate him. Now that he has gone, the fudging can stop.

Repair or replace?

That leads on to the second asset. The Alliance were neither the only nor the most egregious fudgers in the last parliament. Labour fudged too; and in its case the forces which produced the fudging are as powerful as ever. The two great pillars on which the Labour Party is built — class and ideology — have been crumbling for more than 20 years. To replace them, as Hugh Gaitskell half wanted to do, would be to change the whole character of the party. It is just conceivable that such a change might be forced through by a ruthless, determined and, above all, successful Labour prime minister, armed with the patronage which prime ministership brings. So long as the party is in opposition, nothing of the sort is thinkable, let alone do-able.

The alternative to replacing the pillars is to repair them: to adapt the old class categories of mass production manufacturing to the new social patterns of the information society, and to redefine socialism so as to speak to the hopes and fears of that society. This task is not, in principle, impossible. The divisions between haves and have-nots go at least as deep in the new society as in the

old one; and a localist, decentralist, market socialism might well generate more successful, as well as morally worthier, solutions to the problems of the 1990s and 2000s than either Thatcherite neo-liberalism or the so-called social market.

The trouble is that even repair would entail a head-on attack on the interests and values of the existing power centres of the labour movement. Labour, in short, is caught in the trap of its own past history; and, almost by definition, it lacks the human intellectual resources to spring the trap without help from outside. It may not be possible for the new merged party to topple Thatcherism from its perch. What is clear is that no one else can do so instead.

> ***'Pace the pedlars of defeatism, there is no evidence whatever that the Thatcherite counter-revolution is permanent, irreversible or even particularly deeply rooted'***

Its third asset has to be seen against that background. *Pace* the pedlars of defeatism in the posh papers, there is no evidence whatever that the Thatcherite counter-revolution is permanent, irreversible or even particularly deeply rooted. It is true that, in all industrial societies, a complex cultural, technological and social mutation has transformed the conditions of production and the minds of men and women. It is true, too, that in Britain and the United States the neo-liberals of the New Right have been quicker than their rivals to spot the significance of that mutation, and to turn it to their advantage. But it is not true that their success was in any sense inevitable. In central and northern Europe and Japan — still, by any reckoning, the most successful industrial societies in the world — Thatcherite neo-liberalism is conspicuous by its absence. Even in Britain, as Ivor Crewe recently pointed out, the general public are still Beveridgean even if they are no longer Keynesian. The power-worshipping and guilt-ridden chattering classes have largely succumbed to the Thatcherite embrace, just as their grandparents succumbed to the Communist embrace in the 1930s. The wider society is, if anything, less Thatcherite now than it was when Mrs Thatcher came to power.

But it is also, of course, less socialist and — more importantly — less labourist. What has happened, in fact, is that the cultural and technological changes of the last 15 years have created a new political constituency whose aspirations cannot be encompassed by the language and assumptions of mass-production industrialism. This new constituency is, in traditional language, both 'right' and 'left', both individualist and collectivist. It is repelled by the top-down statism which has been fundamental to British socialism since the First World War, and even more repelled by the patronising and hypocritical rhetoric of class solidarity which has been fundamental to the British labour movement for more than 100 years. But it is not satisfied by the mechanistic, two-dimensional utilitarianism of the neo-liberal New Right, or, for that matter, by the watered-down neo-liberalism of the Owenite SDP. It might perhaps be mobilised by a different kind of liberalism: by a late-twentieth-century version of the liberalism of John Stuart Mill or L. T. Hobhouse, as opposed to the liberalism of Fredrich von Hayek.

Imponderables

The fate of the new merged party obviously depends on a huge range of imponderables, including the behaviour of the world economy, the ability of ministers to sidestep the banana skins which lie in wait for all governments, the conduct of the other opposition parties and the shifting cross-currents of the popular mood. It depends most of all, however, on its ability to realise the asset which the new constituency of the late twentieth century represents. That is another way of saying that it depends on its ability to succeed where the Alliance failed: to develop a new model social liberalism, based on a synthesis between the values of individuality and community, and to make it resonate in an increasingly perplexed and sceptical society.

Whether it can do this remains to be seen, but two of the preconditions of success are reasonably clear. The first is that the new party must be genuinely new and not the Liberal Party, or the SDP, or for that matter, the Alliance in new clothes. It will have to tap both the traditions which have come together to establish it, and it will have to make it clear that it is tapping both of them. It will have to be as committed to the collectivist strand in its inheritance as to the individualist one: as hostile to privilege as to uniformity, and as sceptical of the simplistic notion that the market always knows best as of the corresponding notion that the state always does.

The second is that it will have to lift its sights from the nuts and bolts of short-term policy-making and vote-getting to the middle term of politics: to concentrate less on answering the questions on the existing political agenda than on establishing a new agenda, much as the Thatcherites established a new agenda in the 1970s. Satisfying these conditions will require a combination of sensitivity, tolerance and imagination rarely seen in politics. That said, I am more optimistic than I have been since Roy Jenkins was elected for Hillhead. □

Professor David Marquand is a member of the SDP National Committee and was Labour MP for Ashfield 1966-77.

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Reasons to be cheerful: one, two, three, four

BEN PIMLOTT *deftly distinguishes between the myths and the hard facts of Labour's pessimism*

THE NEW YEAR question for the left is this: will Labour be able to take advantage of the break Dr David Owen has given it? The ironic outcome of a massive election defeat has been to give Labour its best chance since 1979. The next few months, before attitudes harden, may determine whether any use is made of it.

There is no doubt that the evidence provided by the 1987 election requires a quantum leap. In some ways, the results were more chilling than in 1983, when at least there was a bundle of excuses. In 1987, Greenwich and the Hatton-Bellos syndrome are inadequate as explanations. Overall, Labour was not much less presentable than in, say, February 1974, yet in the part of the country — the South — where Labour most urgently needed to make progress, it did even worse, relative to the Conservatives, than at any election since 1931.

On 12 June the only comfort was that Labour did not do as badly as seemed possible at the start of the campaign. Today, though none of Labour's internal contradictions have been solved, there is a glimmer of light from outside: a space has opened which it may be possible to fill. The Alliance in its new form cannot be discounted, and the past tendency for the centre party to spring by-election surprises may recur. But the harm to its fortunes, inflicted by the disintegration of the SDP and the Owenite sulk, will take time to repair. Meanwhile, Labour has an opportunity to draw breath, and to consolidate its position as the government's only plausible contender.

Starting to build an anti-Tory consensus may not be as hard as it looks. No Tory government has ever ruled with such a small share of the popular vote: Mrs Thatcher's big majority in the Commons is sustained by a percentage of the electorate smaller than the Conservatives obtained in 1950 or 1964, when Labour won. Buoyed by media praise and the continued timorousness of its opponents, the present administration behaves as though it expresses the temper of the nation. It is a clever illusion. Once the conjurer's hands begin to falter, the weakness of the whole act may become apparent.

Predictions are always wrong, except by accident. Let us talk instead of precedents. David Butler, of Nuffield College, Oxford, has recently pointed to a cycle of governmental popularity in Britain of remarkable consistency. Not only do governments invariably lose support after their initial honeymoon, they tend to bottom out at about the same stage in their term of office.* The nadir is generally reached in year three. Thereafter, they start to recover. This pattern has been maintained even in the Tories' recent era of supremacy. This is of course not just a matter of statistics. It reflects a characteristic malaise.

The initial burst of energy is over; the election-time stimulus to the economy has burnt out; chickens are winging home to roost. Mid-term is the time of financial crises, expenditure cuts and U-turns, of restlessness on the government backbenches and *ennui* in the press. It is a time, too, when voters feel they can experiment with alternative preferences, without having to suffer the consequences.

Mrs Thatcher retires in 1989

Because this is normal, Labour would be foolish to take comfort from the recovery in its fortunes that will almost inevitably begin in the coming year. *Elections, like wars, are not won in brief campaigns, or over periods of four years, but at decisive moments somewhere in the middle.* This is the time of shift and uncertainty, and it is here, during the government's patch of gloom, that it is occasionally possible to see a change of fashion. This happened to Macmillan's government in 1962-3, and again to Wilson's in 1968-9. Imperceptibly but irreversibly, the dominant assessment of an administration moved from success to failure, while interest in the opposition party increased. On each occasion, government inadequacy was a bigger cause than the challenge mounted by the opposition. But each time — and especially in the early 1960s — the unity and competence of the opposition was a factor.

Let us for a moment frivolously indulge our fancy. Let us imagine that, sniped at by Owen and led by an increasingly inattentive David Steel or an inexperienced successor, the Alliance revival does not take off.

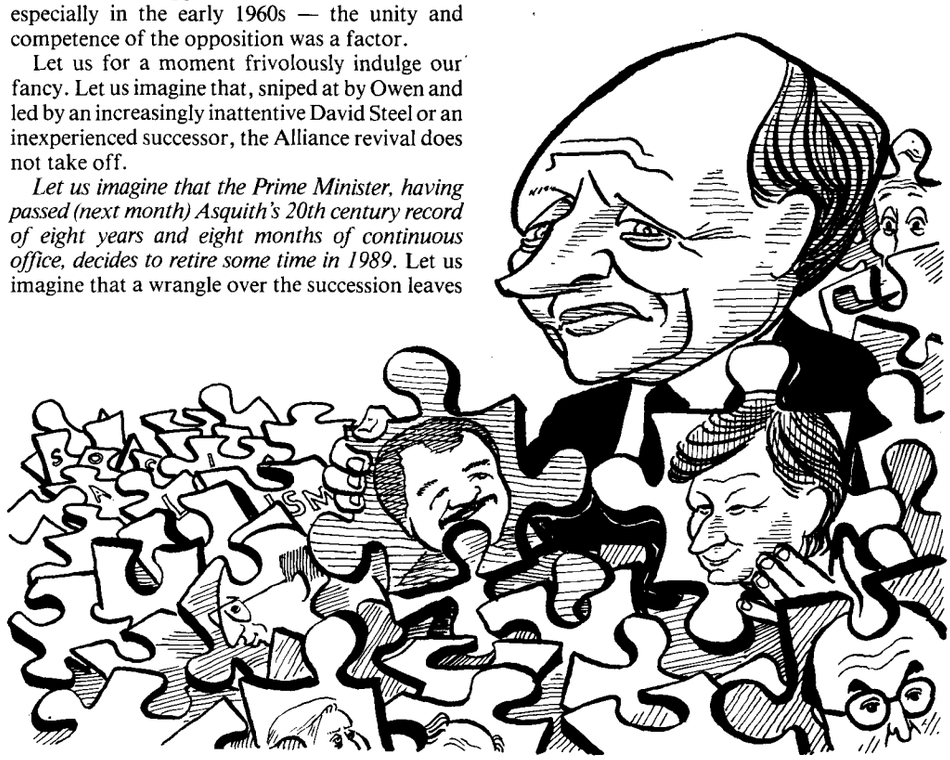
Let us imagine that the Prime Minister, having passed (next month) Asquith's 20th century record of eight years and eight months of continuous office, decides to retire some time in 1989. Let us imagine that a wrangle over the succession leaves the new premier with diminished authority, in the Tory party and in the country. Let us imagine that other problems arise for the government: declining North Sea oil revenues, gathering world recession, and ill-thought out Tory reforms produce an economic and social reaction. In such not only imaginable, but also quite possible, circumstances there could be a crisis of public confidence in the government much more severe than occurred in either of the last two parliaments.

Other things are also imaginable, of course. Some, indeed, are certain: it would be a very odd spell of Labour opposition if it did not include not one but several big splits, purges or quarrels. If long enough delayed, however, such events may be contained, especially if power is seriously believed to be in the offing.

All we need is restraint

Oppositions do not win elections, governments lose them: in the conditions so far described, little except an element of self-discipline depends on Labour. So far in the argument, what Labour represents has mattered little. At this point, however, it acquires a critical importance. For Labour's challenge, when and if the crisis comes, will not be to gain votes but to keep them.

All election studies agree that a wide gulf has long existed between Labour policy and the attitudes of most voters, and this remains the



*The Times, *1 December 1987.*

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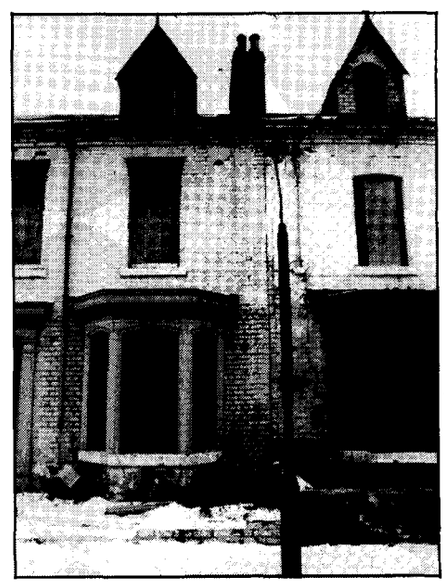
MAKING IT HOME

1987 — the United Nations Year of Shelter for the Homeless

To draw attention to the fact that the work involved in combatting homelessness is far from over, writer **Jeremy Seabrook** has joined forces with photographer **Mark Edwards** to produce a compelling story of the people worldwide who have inadequate or no shelter. The reader is shown how people's lives are affected by homelessness in a disturbing juxtaposition of text and visual imagery — creating an understanding of the problem on a personal human scale.

"Too many images of people badly housed speak of impotence and despair. But it is too easy to see the majority of the homeless as defeated. It must be said that the inventiveness and creativity of people remain by far the most precious resources the world possesses. 'I've tried to make a home, and I've written to politicians, to the Queen. You have to show them that they can't kill the spirit. It isn't good enough, but you can't give up.' "



Photographs: Mark Edwards

Making It Home will be included as a 32-page pull-out insert in the 8 January 1988 edition of the *New Statesman*. Don't miss it.

biggest obstacle to consolidation, should such a situation arise. The obvious response to the mismatch is to ditch unpopular policies and adopt popular ones: new policies for old seems a straightforward solution, especially as the cold douche of the 1987 election has shocked much of the party into a realisation of the need for change. Alas, there are difficulties.

Getting rid of the old is the smaller problem. On defence, Gorbachev has leant a helping hand: it should now be easier for Labour to talk a language that comes closer to the plain man's or woman's understanding of common sense. On public ownership, the hostility of the right to nationalisation *per se* is joining forces with the modern left's suspicion of Morrisonian corporations. The bigger difficulty is how to fill the vacuum. Market research is a useful tool for discovering what voters will *not* swallow. It gives no guidance to would-be innovators.

It is necessary, indeed, for Labour to consider not just something called 'policy', but also what kind of party it is and wants to be. Whatever Bob Worcester or Ivor Crewe may suggest, head-shakingly, that they ought to believe, Labour people need to remember that their history is their strength, as well as their burden.

Thus Labour has always been a party of unions, which means that it is a party of wage-earners — through its affiliated membership it represents directly a much broader range, non-manual and manual, than ever before. Yet it is not simply a party of, or for, the employed. It is also a party that wishes to represent those who cannot find jobs, or are too young, old, sick or disabled to work. This aspect is a large part of what is called socialism. The twin elements of labourism and socialism give Labour its uniqueness, separating it from radical Liberals in Britain, and from populist or region-based Democrats in the United States.

Labour is the product of a class and of an ethical tradition. To survive and flourish, it has to make sense of both, in a new kind of world. Or, to put it another way, the task is to distinguish basic aims that never change (pursuing equal rights, helping the poor, curbing the rich, maintaining peace) from remedies which have to be abandoned almost as rapidly as they are dreamed up.

Attachment to totems is not mere cussedness: it springs from a fear that if they are jettisoned, Labour's nakedness will be apparent. There is a danger that, in response to this fear, the policy review will become a frenzied re-writing of shopping lists. That would be a mistake. A real achievement for the review might be to declare a moratorium on policy: encouraging the Labour Party to understand problems, instead of doling out instant prescriptions. Clear-headedness and a cool critique of Tory mismanagement might be more persuasive in the country, too, than a package of reprocessed and highly vulnerable proposals. A short cut to disaster, certainly, would be a half-baked attempt to make policies fit some notion of what the electorate is now to supposed to be like.

Spring 1990 is the date to ring. In the polls and local elections, Labour is quite likely to be riding high. If, by then, Labour's political lead is matched by an intellectual confidence which has been lacking for much more than a decade, the possibility of power, as well as office, is there. If not, *plus ça change*. □

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1968

I LOVE YOU!!!
OH, SAY IT WITH
COBBLESTONES!!!

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1968

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20TH BIRTHDAY CONCERT

Sunday 24 January 1988
Royal Festival Hall

Part I: 3.00pm

STRAVINSKY	**Agon**
MESSIAEN	**Bryce Canyon**
BIRTWISTLE	**Songs of Autumn** (world première)
	INTERVAL
HOLT	**Ballad of the Black Sorrow** (world première)
WEBERN	**Five Pieces for Orchestra Op 10**
HENZE	**Cinque piccoli concerti e ritornelli from 'The English Cat'** (world première)
	INTERVAL
WEILL	**The Seven Deadly Sins** (staged)
	DINNER INTERVAL

Part II: 7.30pm

RAVEL	**L'Heure Espagnole** (staged)
	INTERVAL
STRAVINSKY	**Ebony concerto**
BERNSTEIN	**Prelude, Fugue and Riffs**
WHITEMAN	**Arrangements**
CONDUCTORS:	*David Atherton*
	Simon Rattle

SOLOISTS:
Elise Ross (soprano)
Ann Murray (mezzo soprano)
Francis Egerton (tenor)
Neil Jenkins (tenor)
Philip Langridge (tenor)
Nigel Robson (tenor)
Nicholas Folwell (baritone)
Stephen Roberts (baritone)
Terry Edwards (bass)
Peter Ross (bass)
Paul Crossley (piano)
Wayne Marshall (piano)
Michael Collins (clarinet)
Michael Thompson (horn)
James Holland (xylorimba)
David Johnson (glockenspiel)

L'Heure Espagnole

LONDON SINFONIETTA VOICES
Director: Terry Edwards

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS directed by Christopher Alden and designed by Paul Steinberg.

L'HEURE ESPAGNOLE directed by Michael Rennison and designed by Mark Wheeler.

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1968

In 1988 the revolution *will* be televised, on all channels, not to mention Radio 4, which is doing a six-part series on *1968: The Year of Dreams* to brighten up January. There'll be *Woodstock* and *Medium Cool* and *Antonio das Mortes* and *Far From Vietnam* and a screen version of Trevor Griffiths' *The Party*. There'll be documentaries on BBCs 1 and 2 and ITV. Over the weekend of 14-15 May Channel 4 will go '68-crazy with more documentaries including (I think) Cohn-Bendit's three-hour 'where are they now' saga, Andy Metcalf's *Blast From The Past* film and a discussion with Cohn-Bendit, Alain Krivine, Robin Blackburn, Kim Howells, Jan Kavan, Stuart Hall, Fredric Jameson, Julia Kristeva, Alain Touraine and Ralf Dahrendorf. Toooo much! (Only management intervention apparently prevented C4 from 'rescheduling all programmes that weekend in "68 style" — you know, black and white, hand-held cameras, *Brookside* Omnibus intercut with footage of Vietnam and Peter Sissons reading the news stoned, with a headband and beads. In the hierarchy of media revivals, 1968 looks like being the biggest show since WWII.

Then there are the books, two of which you'll learn more of later in this supplement. Tariq Ali's *Street Fighting Years* has already provided pundits with the opportunity for a warm-up session. And then the Sundays, the glossies. Something for everybody. Biff cartoons will have a field day; die-hard situationists will denounce recuperation on a grand scale; *Marxism Today* will produce T-shirts decorated with tanks and warn us all against provocateurs. Anybody who was anybody in what seems like the last year when everybody was somebody will get interviewed; the most famous will have time for very little else. I called up Bernadette McAliskey to arrange a chat and was told to join the queue, 'gratifying though it is to learn that the Brits have remembered Ireland after 20 years'.

And however cynical or embarrassing or just plain stupid a lot of the coverage is sure to be, it is indeed gratifying to know that we will be remembering a year (and of course it wasn't just a year, still less a month) when throughout much of the world people who had been denied a voice found one, collectively, in unexpected and absolutely uncompromising mass movements. We shouldn't forget it. Hence this supplement — somewhat early, partly because we hope to shift more copies that way, partly because we'll be busy celebrating our own 75th anniversary next April/May.

We certainly haven't covered everything (in fact the supplement is heavily weighted towards the French May), which should be excusable, given a year that saw: the Tet Offensive, the Prague Spring and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, student uprisings as far apart as Mexico City and Warsaw, the assassination of Martin Luther King and the rise of Black Power in the US, the first confrontations in the Six Counties, the first factory struggles in Italy . . . No excuses, though, for the absence of black voices here: but then the *NS* has always been such a terribly *white* magazine, one sign among many of how little the left in Britain has learnt from the '60s.

'Too bad it didn't work', Ronald Reagan is reported to have said after a private screening of *Reds*. A good enough verdict for '68, too. The defeat — the only honest word for it — of those movements has been and will be discussed in terms of capitalist restructuring, the dead weight of Stalinism, failures of imagination or organisation. And rightly so, though it's always worth recalling another terse statement from Reagan, in 1968, when he was governor of California and faced with militant blacks, farmworkers, Chicanos and students. 'If it takes a bloodbath, let's get it over with. No more appeasement.' There was never much appeasement. In October that year, in Mexico City, several hundred students and workers protesting at government spending on the Olympics, while millions lived in poverty, were gunned down. Even in the US, by early 1970, at least 14 students had been shot dead. We certainly had the numbers, but they always had the guns.

To emphasise straightforward repression is hardly to give a complete account of the 'objective constraints and openings of a determined historical situation'. The US Marxist Fredric Jameson, whose phrase that is, has given one of the most persuasive 'periodisations' of the '60s, as an era between decolonisation of the third world and the 'inner colonised' — women, blacks, minorities, marginals — of the first world, and what could be called neocolonisation in both those areas, through a global capitalism and its omnivorous culture industry. Jameson discerns 'a single process at work in first and third worlds, in global economy and in consciousness and culture, a properly *dialectical* process in which "liberation" and domination are inextricably combined.' Such historiography is a welcome antidote to the rebellion-without-a-cause 'philosophies' of postmodernism, though in theorising process, subjectivity can be relegated to a footnote: 'everything seemed possible.' In this supplement we've tried to give a fuller, more personal meaning to such phrases, alongside the chronologies and interpretations. Which is important, after all, in a time and place where more and more people are silenced, more and more needs systematically denied, more and more possibilities closed off.

None of it has anything to do with nostalgia, which is merely the marketable bits of collective memory. Just before his suicide, Walter Benjamin wrote this: 'In every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from a conformism that is about to overpower it . . . *even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy if he wins.' For 'tradition' you could just as well read 'memory'. But Benjamin's style isn't right for the '60s. How about the US writer Tom Ward? 'It's hard to let sleeping dogs lie, when rabid dogs are lying through their teeth.' Right on, Tom.

Malcolm Imrie

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Telephones: Betty, Dorothy

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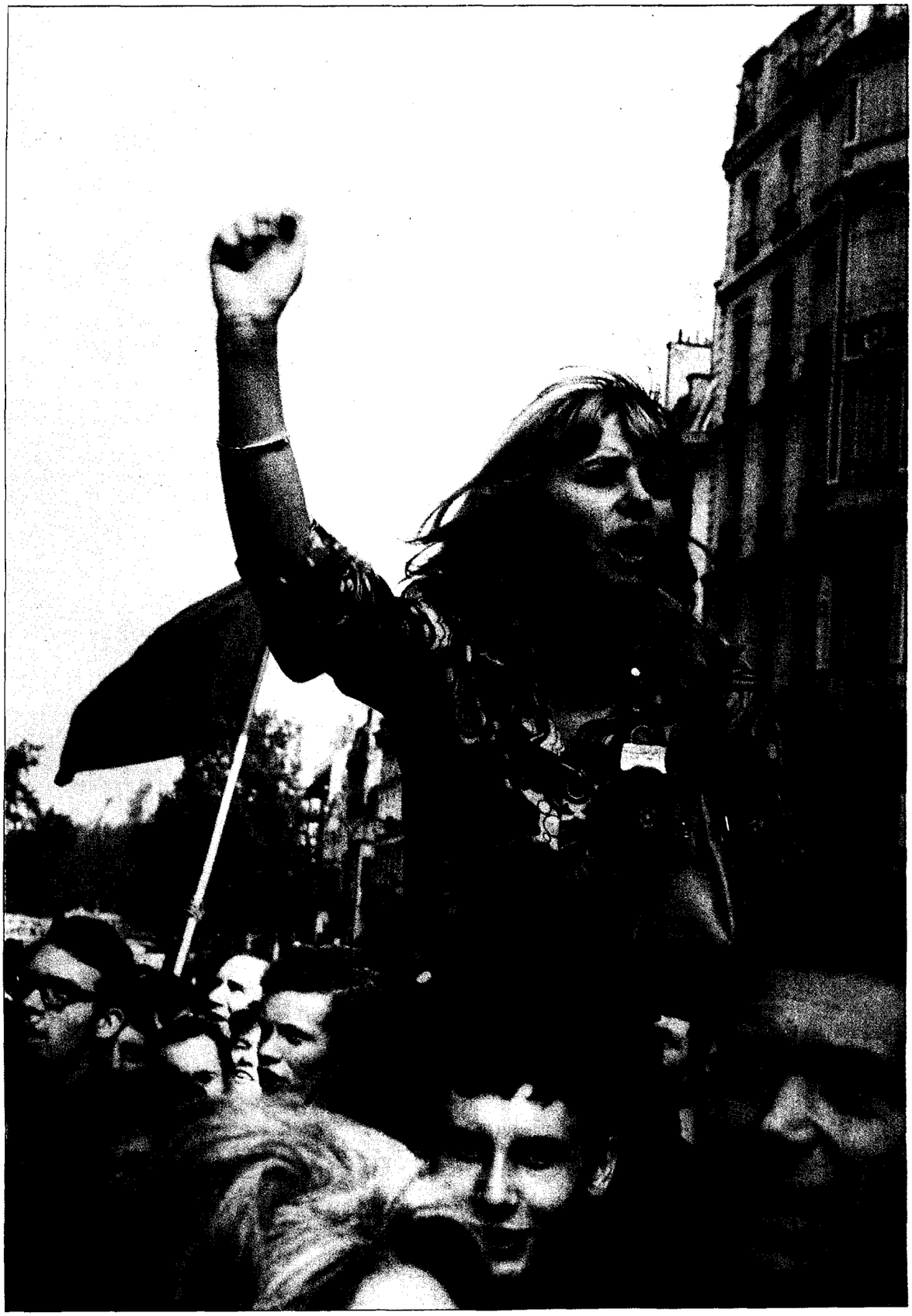

Marc Riboud/Magnum

'And yet everybody wants to breathe and nobody can breathe and a lot of people say "we'll be able to breathe later". And most people don't die because they're already dead'

Graffiti, Nanterre '68

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'La vie, vite': the French May

'The unthinkable had happened! The strikes were like a flame . . . Fuck hierarchy, authority, this society with its cold, rational, elitist logic! Fuck all the petty bosses and the mandarins at the top! Fuck this immutable society that refuses to consider the misery, poverty, inequality and injustice it creates, that divides people according to their origins and skills! I had never dreamt such a thing could happen! Suddenly the French were refusing the state's authority because they understood it was malevolent . . . suddenly they realised that they had to find a new sort of solidarity.' In the words of the participants themselves, Ronald Fraser tells the story of the May events in Paris and throughout France — 30 days that shook the world.

THE 'MAY EVENTS' in France, watched with awe and fascination on both sides of the Atlantic, were the apogee of the student 1968 and all it represented. Here was a student movement that had barely existed in force six months before, taking on and shaking a seemingly secure and authoritarian regime. Here were students catalysing the largest general strike in French history at a time when, even on the left, it was widely held that the working classes were so firmly integrated into capitalist society that no sudden cataclysm could occur. Here was a challenge to the social order which fitted no preconceived pattern and that burst on the world without warning.

Given what was to come, it all started in a small enough way. On 2 May, an ultra right-wing commando attacked a student union office at the Sorbonne university in Paris. It was part of a continuing fight between right- and left-wing students that had become more bitter in recent months. The same day, leaflets circulated saying that right-wingers were going to 'exterminate the leftist vermin' at Nanterre. Left-wing students there called on Maoist militants trained in street fighting to help them protect the university. Two to three hundred of these Maoist students, with helmets, clubs, catapults and ball-bearings, took up position early in the morning of 3 May. Robert Linhart, the leader of the Maoist UJC-ml (Union de Jeunesse Communiste marxiste-leniniste), was there.

'We put down oil so that enemy vehicles would skid, broke down the barbed wire fence that separated the University from the shanty town so that immigrant workers could come to help us in case of battle, organised students in self-defence groups — but no fascist dared show his face that day.'

Looking out of his window on that early morning, the Dean of the Faculty of Letters was reported to have said that he thought 'a foreign army' was occupying his university, and closed Nanterre *sine die*. UNEF, the students' union, called a meeting at the Sorbonne the same day to protest the right-wing threats. Nanterre activists attended. 'It was a ridiculous meeting,' Dany Cohn-Bendit recalled, 'there were barely two hundred of us, the leaders and activists of the groups but nobody else.' After the meeting, rumours circulated that the right-wingers were marching on the Sorbonne. Student marshals were posted on guard at the entrances, a few table legs were torn off as weapons and a sit-in organised. Called in by a panicky Chancellor, the police arrived.

'They surrounded the building,' Cohn-Bendit remembered, 'and we agreed that they should check our identity cards and then let us go. But in fact they only let the women go. They shoved the men into police vans and started taking us down the Boulevard Saint-Michel.'

Calling in the police to the Sorbonne was an extraordinary move; even during the height of the mobilisations against the Algerian war the police had never dared venture into the Sorbonne which remained firmly student 'territory'; moreover, the Chancellor's action infringed all notions of the University's traditional independence, its freedom of expression and critical thinking.

It was a serious mistake on the government's part; but the consequences were even more extraordinary. As the police vans drove off, they were spontaneously attacked by students; Hélène Goldet, one of those allowed to leave the Sorbonne, was among them.

'It was great! Who started it, I don't know, nobody knows to this day. People just didn't like seeing that huge column of black police vans carting off those who'd been arrested. They ripped up the iron gratings from around the trees on the pavement to block the vans, threw everything they could lay their hands on at them, burnt newspapers to prevent the motorcycle police getting through. It was a great battle, a festival! I felt happy. The violence was restoring to the student movement what it had lost since the end of the Algerian War.'

Inside the vans nobody knew what was happening. Maurice Najman, the high school leader who had gone by chance to the Sorbonne that day and been arrested, was amazed as bottles, ashtrays and mustard pots taken from cafés rained against his van. 'I kept thinking, how's this possible? All the student leaders felt the same. Who was organising the battle if they were all in the vans? "Are these your people?" the leaders asked each other. "No . . ." '

The students' spontaneous reaction — aroused, as elsewhere, by an 'outrageous' governmental action — took the police as much by surprise as the student leaders. The former set about beating up everyone they could lay hands on, including many innocent passers-by; the newspapers the next day were full of vivid reports of their brutality. Immediately a considerable sector of public opinion swung behind the students.

THIS WAS only the beginning. The students now had a cause — to free the Sorbonne and four youths who were immediately sentenced to prison for their part in the attack on the police vans. The student leaders, who were released the day after their arrest, met and called for a strike and demonstration the following Monday, 6 May outside the Sorbonne; the university teachers' union supported the move. But when students tried to respond to the call, they found the university area totally blocked by police; soon they were milling by the thousand on the Boulevard Saint-Michel, the main thoroughfare through the Latin Quarter.

By now it was not just university but lycée students who were

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involved. The politicisation in the Paris high schools of the previous two years, the creation of the Comités d'Action Lycéens (CAL), was bearing its fruit. Lilly Métreaux, who was in her last year of Catholic high school, was one of the newly radicalised. 'I had begun to acquire a real culture, Marxism, to understand what was at stake in Vietnam, to take on responsibilities although I was still very young . . . Well, one morning my young brother comes running home, out of breath, with his little satchel, saying: "Come quick, there's a demonstration!" So instead of going to school I followed him and we found ourselves on the Boulevard Saint-Michel in the middle of this huge demo. How can I describe it? A fabulous happiness, a tremendous joy! I recognised a lot of friends from the Vietnam committees, we kissed. And then I see myself, holding hands with my brother, shouting, laughing, going through the streets with the demo. It was May '68!'

Who, if anyone, was going to lead this outpouring which assembled outside the new Science Faculty on the left bank? The demonstrators listened for a while to the far-left leaders expounding their strategies: the Maoist UJC-ml's proposal to make for the working-class suburbs to mobilise workers because they alone had the strength; the answer of the Trotskyist JCR (Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionnaire) was that the German and Italian movements had shown the way, to fight first on your own ground was the best possibility of mobilising active support . . . Restless at hearing these arguments repeated, attracted as though by a magnet to the Sorbonne, the students started making towards it. They were blocked by heavy police forces. JCR leaders, who had to run to catch up, diverted them across the river to the right bank instead where, for a couple of hours, the demonstration meandered, gathering support from bystanders. But the pressure to get back to the left bank and the Sorbonne built up.

'We'd been walking for six hours without food by then,' recalled Henri Weber, the JCR leader. 'So, after recrossing the river, it was on empty bellies and weak legs that we reached the first and huge police road-block. Police coaches across the avenue, three rows of CRS [Compagnie Républicaine de Sécurité, a highly-trained riot-control police force]. The road-block in the next street was smaller. As we made our way towards it police fired tear gas grenades and attacked us with truncheons. We retreated, started to organise. People dragged cars across the street to make a road-block, others "borrowed" hard-hats from a neighbouring construction site. Still others handed out lemon juice which was supposed to help against tear gas. The whole shapeless crowd transformed itself into an active, self-organising ant-hill. And then the clear ring of steel as cobblestones were prised up . . .'

'WARNING: Leaflets have been distributed in the Paris area calling for an insurrectionary general strike. It goes without saying that such appeals have not been issued by our democratic trade-union organisations. They are the work of provocateurs seeking to provide the government with a pretext for intervention . . . The workers must be vigilant to defeat all such manoeuvres.' *L'Humanité* (French Communist Party daily) 20 May 1968

'This explosion was provoked by a few groups in revolt against modern society, against consumer society, against technological society, whether communist in the East or capitalist in the West — groups, moreover, that do not know what they would put in its place, but that delight in negation, destruction, violence, anarchy, brandishing the black flag.' Charles de Gaulle, televised speech, 7 June 1968

As the CRS moved forward the students moved forward too and met them with a hail of cobbles. The police buckled under the attack, then fled in disarray. Unprotected by riot shields, many of their men were left injured on the ground. For the next two hours the students rained cobbles on each police attack, fighting them off.

Stimulated by their audacity, the students scattered to make for Denfert-Rochereau, a large square a mile or so from the Sorbonne, where they had called a solidarity demonstration. Between twenty-five and thirty thousand people marched from the square towards the Sorbonne. Never before had the French student movement mobilised so many people.

The march was brought to a halt by a hail of tear gas grenades. But there was no retreat. Again, the demonstrators transformed themselves into a self-organising column; tearing up cobbles from streets way behind the 'front line', long chains of young men and women passed them to the fighters at the front. Hurling cobbles at the police, most of these were fighting not just the CRS but what they represented: repressive authority in all its forms, 'years of humiliation and oppression in my Catholic school. In fighting the police,' Lilly Métreaux felt, 'it was the nuns I was trying to kill.'

Amidst the all-pervasive smell of tear gas, the battle continued until 10 p.m., when the police finally dispersed the demonstrators, savagely beating those they could lay their hands on and leaving many unconscious and bleeding in the streets. The police claimed 487 casualties among their men; no one knew the number of injured students since many refused to go to hospital. It had been a ferocious street battle which aroused considerable emotion throughout France.

The students had not succeeded in recapturing the Sorbonne; but their courage had won them a political victory. The brutality displayed by the police served to isolate the Gaullist regime in the eyes of a large proportion of the population. In this, 6 May showed both how exceptional the battle had been and how exceptional France under de Gaulle was. Large and militant as the movements had become in the US, West Germany and Italy, they had not mobilised so large a proportion of the population into rejecting the regime itself. Only in Northern Ireland would a small and sudden student movement five months after Paris precipitate something similar. The reason in both countries lay in the exceptional nature of these authoritarian states.

NORMALLY IT IS relatively easy for the governments of advanced bourgeois democracies to isolate and blacken those who take to the streets and fight the forces of law and order. The media, if not the government itself, denounce the 'men of violence' in the name of democracy. But in France, as in Northern Ireland, things were different: it was the government which for many years had resorted to violence to maintain its 'democratic' order. In France, the brutality of the CRS was only too well known to workers who had carried on long strikes in the 1960s, to peasants and small wine-growers demonstrating against low prices for their crops. Moreover, the CRS was only the most visibly oppressive force of a regime whose authoritarian and arbitrary nature had come to be increasingly resented. A resentment suffered in silence until, by their very action in attacking the police, the students shattered the silence, expressing openly what many had unspokenly felt.

An opinion poll two days after the battle reported that four-fifths of Parisians supported the students. It was clear from this that large sectors of the middle class — including students' parents — were behind them. The government was unmoved; the police remained in the Sorbonne. The leaders of the different political student groups, of UNEF and the university teachers' union, decided to call a demonstration every day until the Sorbonne was liberated and the four youths arrested had been released.

The first demonstration was large and peaceful — 45,000 people swarmed up the Champs Elysées in a sea of red and black flags and sang the 'Internationale' over the grave of the Unknown Soldier at the Arc de Triomphe, one of de Gaulle's most revered monuments. UNEF and university teachers' union leaders, Sauvageot and Geismar respectively, believed that they could start negotiation from a position of strength. The next day they gave the government a sign of goodwill, allowing Young Communists and hardline Trotskyist students of the Fédération des Étudiants Révolutionnaires (FER) — both of whom argued that to fight the police was to play into the latter's hands — to persuade demonstrators to go home. Cohn-Bendit, who had been giving an interview to the BBC, arrived soon afterwards to find people crying. 'At first I thought there had been a battle with tear gas. But no, they were crying out of frustration. Geismar, Sauvageot and the whole gang had tried to make a deal behind their backs. But the police were still in the Sorbonne.'

He returned to a meeting of the 22 March Movement. 'Physically we were all very tired. But physically we were electrified by what was at stake, which was to get rid once and for all of uncontrolled "leaders" who decided things behind our backs. We had to fight now for the movement's *autonomy*. 22 March hadn't been active enough in this respect. We had to find ways for people to meet and speak up and decide together what *they* wanted to do. And if they felt like moving into a head-on confrontation with the police, so be it! We would help the movement express its collective will and side with it.'

His arguments rallied the one hundred or so 22 March students from Nanterre who were present. From the start of the events they had met nightly in a small Paris apartment, at the suggestion of Anne Querrien, a 22 March member, who had seen that the Nanterre group might otherwise collapse. The women cooked, cared for the injured, bought food,

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The Sorbonne during the occupation. *Bruno Barbey/Magnum*

prepared banners. 'We felt — and I still think — that by taking care of these material aspects we were being fully political. The men were making the speeches, but we made sure everything worked. At times like that it's worth being a woman, you know.'

At 2 a.m. Geismar, whom a friend had fetched, arrived exhausted and shattered. 'We accused him of betraying the movement,' recollected Cohn-Bendit. 'He burst into tears. ' "You're right, I've betrayed the students, I've been a damn fool!" "Crying won't help," we said, "let's call for a new demo." '

'So there we go again! We started writing a leaflet,' Querrin continued. 'I had developed a special skill which was to write a leaflet under the guidance of an assembly. I would read back a few sentences and they would say, "No, that expression isn't right, let's put it this way . . ." and through this feedback we achieved a very efficient kind of collective writing. It was 5 a.m. when we finished the leaflet.'

'People who talk about revolution and class struggle without referring explicitly to everyday life, without understanding what is subversive about love and what is positive in the refusal of constraints, such people have a corpse in their mouth' Graffiti, Sorbonne '68

After only three hours sleep, but feeling 'great', Cohn-Bendit presented the other student leaders with the fruits of the 22 March Movement's night-long meeting. ' "Here you are, we're calling a rally at Denfert-Rochereau tomorrow at 6 p.m. We've printed 100,000 leaflets" – I was bluffing, there was no way we could have managed that – "and called a press conference. Either you join or you quit." Geismar was in favour, Sauvageot [the UNEF leader] hesitated, the [Trotskyist] FER was against. But the JCR came out in support. So the leaflets got printed.'

This rally on Friday 10 May was to lead to the bitterest battle of all: the night of the barricades. But the previous evening, the movement received an important political fillip. A large international meeting in Paris of the Trotskyist Fourth International to which the JCR belonged, was opened, at Cohn-Bendit's request, to the movement. The meeting was very important, in Henri Weber's view, 'because it matured the movement politically. Listening to the speeches by student delegates from Germany, Italy, Spain, Belgium and Holland, the Paris students became aware of the international dimension of their struggle.'

Cohn-Bendit told the meeting that no single group could claim for itself the leadership of this movement which would have to find its own voice, its own goals.

The next morning, 10 May, saw thousands of high school students roaming the capital, pulling one school after another out on strike. Lilly Métreaux was among them. 'I felt our time had come at last. There was a sort of magic island coming out of nowhere, and it was us, the young ones, who were pulling it out. I was with my young brother and his high school friends. They were all in tenth grade, I was in twelfth [final year]. My brother's best friend, Nicolas, and I fell in love, became lovers. And on that famous Friday, 10 May, I

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helped them bring out their school on strike, going from classroom to classroom. All the kids ran into the streets . . .'

For some, this 'magic island' had no exact parameters or specificity, its appearance couldn't be explained. 'Like everyone else, I was in the streets shouting, "free our comrades!" ' recalled Brigitte Ballet, a UJC-ml member, 'and then I went home to find some friends of my parents there who asked me to explain what exactly we were asking for, what we wanted. I was absolutely incapable of explaining, I couldn't say that I didn't even know who these comrades were, couldn't say that I wanted to demonstrate for the sake of demonstrating. The fact was that to anyone who asked rationally enough "what do you want?" I had no answer at all. I left the room, I was a teenager.'

Many perhaps felt the same but lacked the honesty to admit it. And yet, on the other hand, it was the refusal to articulate demands that fell within 'rational' bourgeois discourse that characterised much of the movement because the latter was felt precisely to be a protest against the rationality that permitted a regime like de Gaulle's to exist.

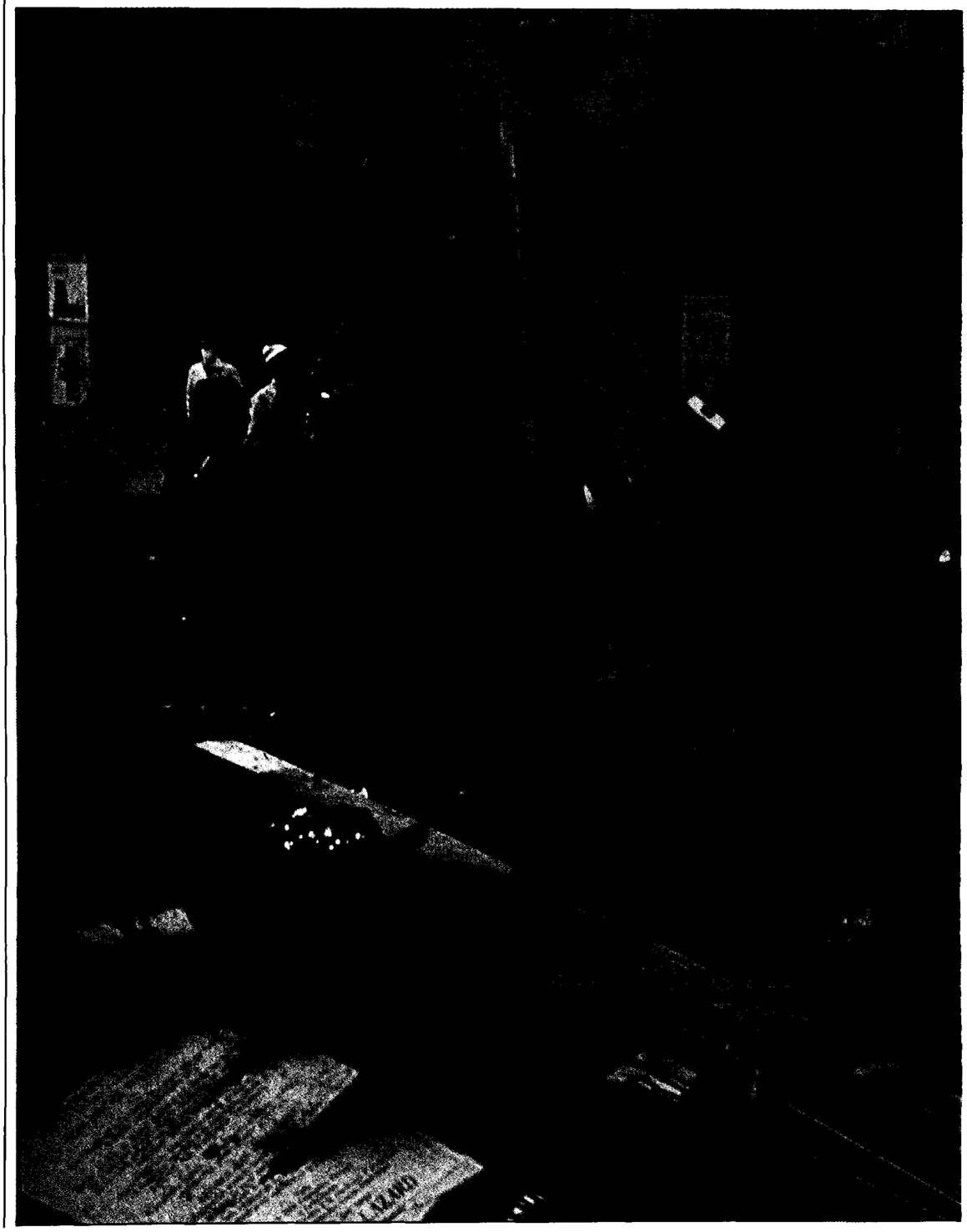
That evening 20,000 people crowded into Denfert-Rochereau. The student leaders climbed onto the statue of the lion in the centre: they were in a quandary about what to do. In Weber's view, 'it had to be something new, instead of attacking the police once again. But what? Attack the prison where the four youths were being held? Hopeless. Try to take the Town Hall as the people had done during the Paris Commune in 1871? Not very easy. Make for the TV station? It was heavily guarded — and *who* could speak in the name of the whole movement?'

'Something had to be done. True to his principles, Cohn-Bendit tried to turn the rally into a general assembly; but even he had to admit that direct democracy had met its limits. 'There were 20,000 of us, and from the top of the lion I was proposing that we decide collectively where to go. It couldn't work. The prison wasn't far off and some people started marching towards it. Then the whole crowd followed.'

The prison was not protected by police forces. The demonstrators cheered when inmates waved handkerchiefs through the barred windows, sang the 'Internationale', and went on. There was no leadership; Cohn-Bendit had made all the groups' delegates agree previously that there would be no marshals, no 'bureaucratic leadership'. The demonstrators could decide where they wanted to go. Nonetheless, UNEF tried to bring in its marshals. Cohn-Bendit went to the head of the march. 'I climbed onto a bench with my loudhailer and shouted for as long as the demonstrators were marching by: "There are no marshals and no leaders today! Nobody is responsible for you! *You* are responsible for yourselves, each row of you responsible for itself! *You* are the marshals!" People were really surprised . . .'

The demonstration circled around the Latin Quarter before reaching a square not far from the Sorbonne. By now it was 9 p.m. Weber saw that the police were leaving only one route open — back to Denfert-Rochereau. 'There was no way we were going back to where we'd started from. But we still didn't know what to do. We — the leaders of the various groups — got together, there on the pavement, surrounded by the crowd and by a lot of people who insisted on giving us their advice . . .'

The pressure on them now was tremendous; they had to find a way forward. But with the crowd all around they could hardly hear each other talk, let alone think. Some people linked arms to make a large circle around them, keeping the demonstrators at a distance. From the leaders' huddle there emerged a new tactic. 'Cohn-Bendit suggested it,' recalled Weber. 'We were to occupy the whole of the Latin Quarter around the police lines and organise small discussion groups. We'd stay the whole night if necessary and the next day until our demands were met. "We will not attack the police, but if they attack



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'The revolutionary hopes of the 1960s, which culminated in 1968, are now blocked or abandoned. One day they will break out again, transformed, and be lived again with a different result . . . When that happens, the situationist programme (or anti-programme) will probably be recognised as one of the most lucid and pure political formulations of that earlier, historical decade, reflecting, in an extrem way, its desperate force and its privileged weakness. What then was its privileged weakness? . . . They ignored the everyday fact of tragedy, both on a world and a personal scale. They refused to face the need to find meaning in tragedy.' John Berger, *New Society*, 6 March 1975

us we shall retaliate." '

As the leaders dispersed through the crowd to explain the decision, they were met again and again by the same question: how do we retaliate if they attack us? 'With cobblestones', came the answer. Not to be caught by surprise, the crowd split up immediately into small groups and began to pile up stacks of cobbles. Communist students tried to dissuade them; the whole thing was a provocation, they said. No one listened; the demonstrators were happy to have something concrete to do. Then, as the piles of stones grew, Weber saw something new.

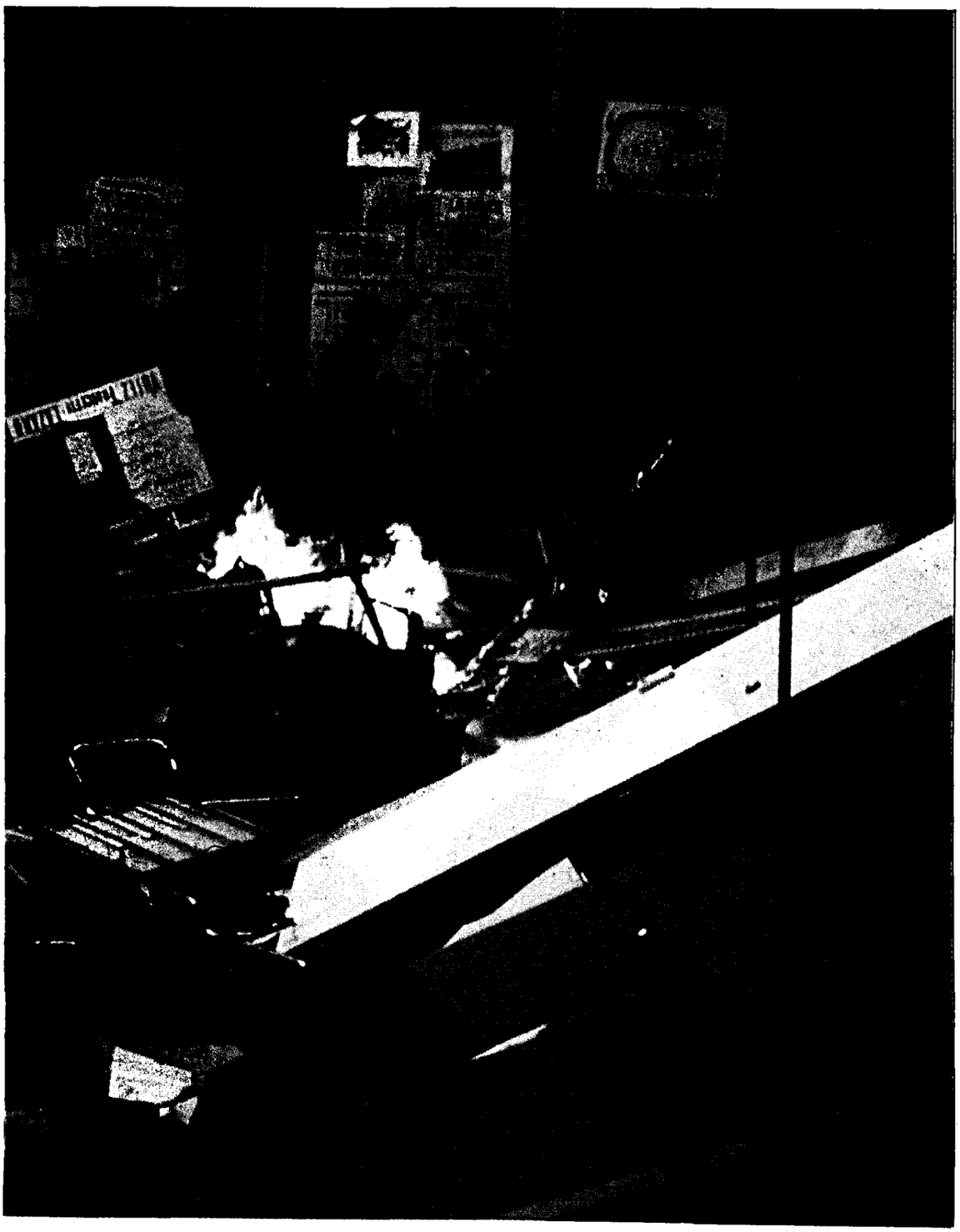
'It was a real stroke of genius. People were beginning to make the piles into barricades. Militarily speaking, it was probably silly. But politically, it was exactly the thing to do. The image of barricades in French history is associated with all the heroic moments of popular uprisings: 1830, 1848, the Paris Commune. The barricade is a symbol, the defence of the poor, of the workers against the armies of the kings and reactionaries.'

There was euphoria as barricades began to spring up everywhere in joyous confusion. Some faced one way, others another: ten were built one behind the other in the Rue Gay-Lussac alone. There was no central plan, just the need to *do* something — something that echoed to a long revolutionary tradition. Cohn-Bendit pitched in with the rest. 'Then someone came up with a map on which he'd marked all the places where barricades were going up. "Go back," I said, "and tell them to leave room to retreat." I could see that if the first barricade were taken, the second as likely as not was going to stop people escaping. I went to the front line to cool out a group of toughs who wanted to attack the police straight away. Three of them came back with me. "We're going to stay with you in case you need protection." From then on, every time anyone came up just to look at me, they'd say, "Leave him alone, he has important things to do."

'I toured the whole area. Residents were at their windows, offering us food and milk. The atmosphere was fantastic. It's a moment I shall never forget. People were building up the cobblestones into barricades because they wanted — many of them for the first time — to throw themselves into a *collective*, spontaneous activity. People were releasing all their repressed feelings, expressing them in a festive spirit. Thousands felt the need to communicate with each other, to love one another. That night has forever made me optimistic about history. Having lived through it, I can't ever say, "it will never happen" . . .'

Radio reporters were on the spot, transmitting live news of the events all over France; demonstrators with transistor radios kept them tuned in and , through the feedback, felt they were participating in the making of history.

The government was now caught in a trap: if it ordered the CRS to attack it would be cast once again in the role of a maleficent force and rally large sectors of the population against it. But to give in would be a sign of weakness which might encourage those same sectors to emulate the students' successful 'direct action'. It tried to steer an uneasy course between the two by having the Chancellor of the



At the barricades. *Bruno Barbey/Magnum*

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Sorbonne announce that he was prepared to meet student delegates. Then there began an extraordinary negotiation conducted over a radio link and broadcast live between Geismar and the Sorbonne's Vice-Chancellor. Geismar demanded that the four youths be freed as a prior condition of negotiations — a demand the demonstrators at Denfert-Rochereau had insisted on. The Vice-Chancellor responded that this was not in his power to grant, but that he would contact the Minister of the Interior and call back. Geismar said that the minister could communicate his answer to the students over the radio, and asked people in apartments in the Latin Quarter to put transistors on their windowsills. Nearly an hour later, the Vice-Chancellor called to say that he could not go beyond his original offer. Geismar responded: 'We have put forward our positions publicly, in front of the people who are all listening. If the government is not prepared to assume its responsibility in the matter, then it is the people who will have to. That *is* clear to us.'

The negotiations were cut off. Direct confrontation seemed now almost inevitable. A chance meeting with one of his Nanterre sociology professors, who asked Cohn-Bendit to accompany him to a meeting with the Sorbonne Chancellor — but did not tell the latter the student leader was coming — gave Cohn-Bendit a last-minute opportunity of trying to prevent a bloodbath. 'That night I knew I was the only one who could cross the police lines without being thought a traitor.' As he went through the lines the police recognised him. 'I've *never* seen such hatred on anyone's face. They were also frightened, I think. You could hear the sound of the crowd, the barricades being built all around. It had been going on for several hours by now.'

At last he found himself facing the Chancellor. ' "What do you want me to do?" he asked. "It's very simple," I said. "Get the police out, re-open the Sorbonne. I'll find three or four bands and that'll be it. A festival. Nothing else will happen. People will dance and drink and be happy." Then the phone rang in the next room. He went out. When he came back he said, "Are you Cohn-Bendit?" "Yes." He returned to the other room and the phone. Then he came back again and, very sadly, said: "I am sorry there is nothing I can do", and left the room.'

The Minister of the Interior had told the Chancellor not to negotiate with Cohn-Bendit: the government would not negotiate with the forces in the street, with a leader who was not a duly elected representative. A small group of ministers met to impose order by force. There were those, it appears, who wanted to order the police to shoot; a dose of moderation at least prevailed.

At 2 a.m. students saw the CRS putting their gas masks on in preparation for the attack. The barricades were still held by thousands of people. Hearing the news, youths had swarmed in from the working-class suburbs to lend a hand. Behind the barricades people turned on the water hydrants to douse the tear gas grenades and put scarves round their mouths. And then they heard the police order to attack . . .

The savage night of battle that followed was heard all over France. Radio reporters covered it live. The exploding plop of tear gas grenades, the vicious, brutal shouts of the riot police as they stormed barricades, the thud of exploding car petrol tanks, the groans of wounded students being carted off to ambulances — it was in everyone's front room. A well-known former soccer commentator was reporting the events for one station:

"Now the CRS are charging, they're storming the barricade — oh, my God! There's a battle raging. Now the students are counter-attacking, you can hear the noise — the CRS are retreating . . . Now they're re-grouping, getting ready to charge again. The inhabitants are throwing things from their windows at the CRS — oh! The police are retaliating, shooting grenades into the windows of apartments . . ." At this point the radio station, which had been telling the commentator over the air not to dramatise events, interrupted him. "This can't be true, the CRS don't do things like that!" "I'm telling you what I'm seeing . . ." His voice went dead — they'd cut him off.

Cohn-Bendit was following the commentary on the radio; at the start of the battle he had taken shelter in a friend's apartment — everyone knew that if he were caught by the CRS he would be badly manhandled. He heard what everyone else was hearing: vivid reports of students in hand-to-hand fighting to defend their barricades, some of which were a sea of flames; the streets a choking fog of tear gas through which the black silhouettes of the CRS swirled, their clubs smashing on heads; the hail of cobbles from behind the barricades which sent them reeling; bleeding students being snatched from apartments which here and there the CRS ransacked as well; Red Cross volunteers being felled by truncheons and people dragged from stretchers and ambulances for further beating; the flames lighting up the pitched battles in the Rue Gay Lussac where petrol from cars piled on the barricades had caught light . . .

'At dawn, when the last barricades were taken after that very tough night, I called the radio station,' Cohn-Bendit recalled. 'I said that things were now very clear, and referred to the need for a general strike. If *this* time the trade union movement did not call one, I added, it meant they were no longer on the people's side.'

In the afternoon, Geismar and Sauvageot, the UNEF leader, negotiated with the Communist-led CGT and the other unions to call a day's strike and a demonstration for Monday, 13 May — the tenth anniversary of de Gaulle's accession to power. The CGT was opposed to the timing, fearing that it would be seen, symbolically at least, as a direct challenge to the regime. But Geismar held his ground.

TOUS DANS LA RUE!

IT WAS AN immense demonstration. The students had touched a more profound chord in the consciousness of the nation than they themselves were aware of. Cohn-Bendit was staggered when he saw the whole avenue packed shoulder-to-shoulder with demonstrators. 'We'd thought there'd be 20,000 of us and 40,000 of the Communist Party. But there were hundreds of thousands of people there.'

A million, it was said, but no one knew for sure. This was no longer a student but a mass movement. Its sudden emergence from nowhere posed a decisive question for the future; who would lead it? The demonstration itself showed the still delicate balance of strength among the contenders. The Communist Party did not want it to be led by the far-left student groups. When Cohn-Bendit and his group had worked their way to the front of the demonstration, 'Séguy, the CGT leader, told Sauvageot and Geismar that he didn't want "that Cohn-Bendit with me".' But they replied that if Cohn-Bendit didn't come, nor would they, and so Séguy was obliged to accept his presence in the front rank.

Not without further incident between Communists and far leftists — the latter chanting, to Communist anger, Paris! Rome! Berlin! Budapest! Warsaw! One and the Same Fight! — the huge demonstration marched through Paris. The student struggles that had preceded it had changed the consciousness of a great many people; Michel Wieviorka, an unpolitical business school student, for example, who joined the march. 'I didn't give a damn about politics. But from the beginning of May I knew right away which side I was on. I suppose it came from my family background, secular Jewish, inclined to the left. On the demo my friends and I weren't part of any group. The demo happened to pass by the home of one of my aunts who did a lot of sewing. I ran up the stairs and asked her for a piece of black cloth. She gave it to me without asking questions. I ran down, went into a wood shop and bought a stick to make myself a black flag. Then I went straight back into the demo, very happy, raised my flag aloft. Suddenly I realised I was in the middle of a group of Communist workers! They made me aware pretty quickly that I was in the wrong place! The truth is, I didn't know where my place was in the demo, but I *knew* for sure that I belonged to the movement.'

A widely-shared sentiment as the demonstrations in most large cities throughout France showed. But when the Paris demonstration reached Denfert-Rochereau, the Communist Party called for people to go home. Cohn-Bendit was furious. 'I wanted the movement to go on, people to discuss what to do next, to organise themselves. I decided to have a meeting on the Champ de Mars, at the foot of the Eiffel Tower. I plunged into the crowd looking for groups who wanted to continue . . .'

At the meeting it was decided to call for the occupation of all French universities; but while the gathering was still in progress, the news came that the CRS was withdrawing from the Sorbonne, that the four youths were being released. The government had given in. Students flooded into the Sorbonne. In the main quadrangle a large piano was brought in and someone started to play jazz. An atmosphere of excitement and optimism reigned. The festival lasted the whole night.

In the following days the quadrangle became a hive of activity. All the groups set up tables and distributed their leaflets. Posters of Stalin and Trotsky appeared in unbelievable juxtaposition; so too did Mao and Guevara. People rushed to and fro

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organising a crèche, a first aid post, a food supply centre. On all this hubbub there fell from time to time a shower of Situationist leaflets, alerting people to the dangers of left-wing bureaucrats. People from all walks of life came out of curiosity to see what was happening and often remained to participate in the organisation of the occupation. Amidst all this, the Trotskyist JCR took over lecture halls and started non-stop debates on the history of the working-class movement, the place of the student movement in it, the immediate tasks ahead. Every day a general assembly was held in the main lecture hall to discuss the political situation and to vote on the next moves.

'It was fantastic,' Weber recalled. 'May was like that, like living on a constant high. Life was beautiful, the weather was lovely, the men were handsome and the women superb. Everything we did immediately belonged to History. All the hierarchies had suddenly dissolved. The student movement was threatening de Gaulle himself. As soon as we took over the Sorbonne we insisted that the movement must spread out beyond it, make links with the workers. Our goal was to topple de Gaulle.'

'. . . the Luddites, Rimbaud, the Communards, wildcat strikers, the movements of May '68 — in every case the revolution does not speak indirectly; they *are* the revolution, not concepts in transit. Their speech is symbolic and it does not aim at an essence. In these instances, there is speech before history, before politics, before truth, speech before the separation and the future totality. S/he is truly a revolutionary who speaks of the world as non-separated. There is no possible or impossible. The utopia is here in all the energies that are raised against political economy. But this utopian violence does not accumulate; it is lost. It does not try to accumulate itself as does economic value in order to abolish death. It does not grasp for power. To enclose the 'exploited' within the single historical possibility of taking power has been the worst diversion the revolution has ever taken. One sees here to what depths the axioms of political economy have undermined, pervaded and distorted the revolutionary perspective. Utopia wants speech against power and against the reality principle which is only the phantasm of the system and its indefinite reproduction. It wants only the spoken word; and it wants to lose itself in it.'

Jean Baudrillard, *The Mirror of Production*, US translation 1975

AN ILLUSORY hope, it seemed at the time. Despite the ten-day student struggle and its culmination in the massive Paris demonstration and the one-day strike, factories were working as normal the following day. Most universities were occupied, but few showed the militancy and fervour of the Sorbonne. Cohn-Bendit returned to Nanterre to find that the students' main concern was whether final examinations should be held. 'It was a real let-down. The pressure to hold exams was very strong. We were taken aback to find the assemblies all focusing on this question. We had little to say about it, lacked a political alternative to put forward.'

And then, quite unexpectedly, came a small item of news: the workers at the Sud Aviation factory at Nantes, in western France, had gone on strike, locking the factory managers in their offices. Earlier student actions had played an important role in precipitating the strike. A small group of Situationist-inspired students had taken over the Nantes student union the previous autumn. At the beginning of May they brought the University out on strike; and during the one-day general strike of 13 May, they led a demonstration of students and workers to the Préfecture, the seat of centrally-administered power, headed by a government-appointed *préfet*.

Accompanied by trade union representatives, Jean Breteau, the student union leader, walked into the *préfet*'s office. 'I asked for the grant to the student's union which he had refused to us the previous autumn — a ridiculous amount [equivalent to about £800] — on the pretext that we were "intolerable hoodlums". He refused. We went back to the demo and I announced the news. Then one of the CGT delegates whispered in my ear,

Workers meeting. *Bruno Barbey/Magnum*

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"Now tell them to go home." "No, I can't do that." "Tell them! he insisted. "No!" It wouldn't have made much difference because the crowd was determined to fight.'

The battle began: cobblestones against tear gas. But there were no CRS there that day and the local police were outnumbered. 'Soon we had the Préfecture surrounded by barricades on all sides. Finally the *préfet* agreed to see us again. The building stank of tear gas. He agreed to give us the grant. But the workers who were with us were saying, "but what have *we* workers got? Nothing. We're fools, we didn't even ask for anything." '

The next day the Sud Aviation workers came out on strike. A few hundred people; three days later, two million were out all over France; another three days, nine million. No one had called for a general strike; and yet here was the largest strike in French history, a spontaneous movement spreading over the country with incredible speed. Factories and offices, oil refineries and shipyards, transport and post offices, banks, department stores, administrative buildings, high schools ground to a halt all over the country; a calm but massive refusal was being expressed — the refusal to continue to live and work under the authoritarian conditions of the Gaullist regime.

Pursuing a strategy of national 'grandeur', de Gaulle's policies over the past decade had involved a modernisation of capitalism, a stock-piling of gold to secure independence from American economic power, and vast arms spending to gain military independence. The working class had borne the brunt of these policies. Wages were the lowest in industrialised Western Europe, work rhythms were speeded up while the average work week remained 48 hours. The economic policies took little account of rising unemployment, especially among the young. There had been at least two riots by young workers the previous autumn in provincial towns. The managerial class, meanwhile, was benefiting from rapid economic growth and the consumer society. In a centralised country like France, the state appeared to many as ultimately responsible for these inegalitarian policies. The employers' and state's consistent response to workers' demands was one of arrogant refusal. But this time, due to the state's repression of students, arrogance led them into a trap.

'The unthinkable had happened! The strikes were like a flame, like everything we'd been saying at Nanterre,' recalled Nelly Finkielsztejn. 'Fuck hierarchy, authority, this society with its cold, rational elitist logic! Fuck all the petty bosses and the mandarins at the top! Fuck this immutable society that refuses to consider the misery, poverty, inequality and injustice it creates, that divides people according to their origins and skills! I had never dreamt such a thing could happen! Suddenly the French were refusing the state's authority because they understood it was malevolent, evil, just as I'd always thought as a child. Suddenly they realised that they had to find a new sort of solidarity. That was what was important about May. Not the slogans like "imagination is seizing power" and the rest, not the poetry and exuberance, but this new-found solidarity. That was what May meant to me!'

Since her discovery as a youth of the holocaust in which her relatives had died, Finkielsztejn had been in revolt against a society that could go on as though nothing had happened; at Nanterre she had become an anarchist and part of the 22 March Movement. Not everyone, without doubt, would have as much cause as she for condemning society; yet similar condemnations of the Gaullist regime were now resounding throughout France. (The most succinct and graphic illustration of this perhaps came when strikers at a lorry plant reordered the letters of their firm's name — Berliet — to call it Liberté.) Suddenly, collectively, people discovered that what they had felt, but not dared in their individual isolation to express, was shared by the vast majority: a desire for radical change, a desire for a different form of society. A society in which everyone had a say in matters that concerned them directly: a self-managed society.

The students now attempted to forge links with the striking workers. On 17 May, Sorbonne students went to the state-owned Renault automobile plant at Billancourt, a Paris suburb, which had come out on strike the previous day. Henri Weber, whose JCR had pushed strongly for the demonstration, recalled what happened when the students reached the huge factory. 'We found that all the iron gates, all the doors, had been locked by the union to "prevent provocations".' The Communist-led CGT had issued leaflets warning the workers not to fraternise with the students. 'All the same many workers came out to talk to us. They were friendly, and most of them were embarrassed by the CGT's call to keep us out. Some, when they learnt of it, turned angrily on their union officials. We had expected them to give us advice on where to lead the movement. Instead, we found that they were asking us for advice!'

The Communist Party feared an escalation of the movement. Since the early 1960s the party had been pursuing, not without some success, a parliamentary road to power. It believed that if the general strike turned into an insurrectionary situation, it might itself be crushed because the Gaullist regime still commanded the allegiance of the military. Fearful of the worst, the Party set out to 'contain' the strike movement, return it to 'normal' economic trade union demands that would not threaten the bourgeois state. In doing so, it reinforced rather than weakened the regime, preventing the very condition which might have led to its collapse. The fact that, despite the Communist Party, the Gaullist regime nearly fell anyway only shows the determination of the strike forces arrayed against the regime.

Contrary to the Communist Party, the Maoist UJC-ml believed that the moment was ripe for revolution. While it had scorned the student struggles as petty bourgeois in the first ten days of May, it entered the fray once the working class came out on strike. It dispatched its militants to working-class areas to mobilise support. André Liber, the high school militant, was sent to contact mechanics at the Paris bus garages; there he found a number of them who were willing to 'go all the way

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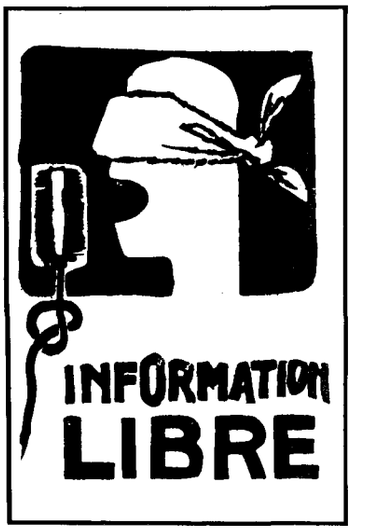
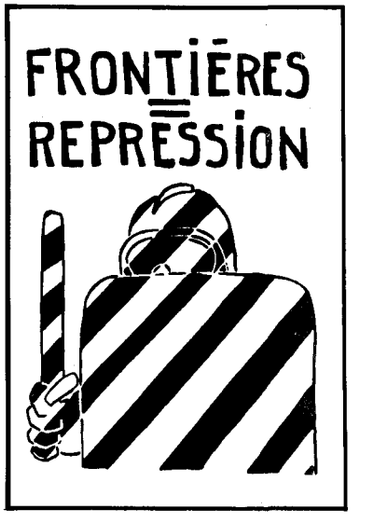
. . . They were former Communist Party activists or anarcho-syndicalist in the main. We formed a group, printed leaflets to firm up the strike, denounced the Communist Party . . . In the working-class suburb of Gennevilliers, the workers were preparing to fight the police. At a tar plant upon a hill, they'd got a dozen lorries loaded with stones ready to send plunging down. And they kept tar constantly boiling and the hoses ready to spray it from.'

Tiennot Grunback, veteran of the Algerian struggles and now a UJC-ml leader, experienced May as though it were another Russian revolution. A few weeks before, in line with his group's decision that activists should become manual workers, he had started to work in a

Poster printing at the Beaux Arts. *Marc Riboud/Magnum*





printers where many left-wing papers were printed. Among them was the UJC-ml *La Cause du Peuple* which, during the May events, had become a daily. 'I spent my days and nights in the shop, getting tremendous pleasure from seeing our paper come out. Maybe it was a kind of megalomaniac trip. I knew that in the Russian revolution, Stalin had printed *Pravda*! I kept telling myself: this time *you* are the Stalin of May 68!' he laughed. 'By the way, the shop was not sectarian; we also printed the JCR's paper.

But apart from some Leninist groups like the UJC-ml, the revolutionary seizure of state power did not appear a widespread goal. The movement's aims were rather an attempt to change radically the power relations in work places everywhere. In factories, offices, research centres, radio and TV stations, people held general assemblies every morning where they criticised the relations of authority and the division of labour, proposing ways of reorganising the work processes and democratising decision-making. The general assemblies elected delegates to work-place action committees

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whose task — like a strike committee — was to coordinate the new initiatives. Soon the movement spread out to residential neighbourhoods, where action committees fostered self-organisation and met whatever local needs were felt lacking. Their aim was essentially to mobilise ever larger numbers of people in a self-governing activity that would create new, albeit embryonic, social structures to challenge those of the existing order. In Nantes, where this self-organisation reached its highest level, the city was run for more than a week by a central strike committee which made good the breakdown of transport and the distribution of food. It called on the peasants' union to sell food directly to the populace and allocated petrol coupons for emergency use. There, as elsewhere, the new committees expressed what was quintessential about May: the popularly felt need to overthrow the authoritarian and bureaucratic structures of Gaullist France in the name both of freedom and the right to manage one's own affairs.

By the last week of May there were over 450 such committees in Paris alone. While many provincial centres tended to lag behind the capital, the movement began to take root even in them; but it often required the presence of students to start it. In Angers, a conservative town in western France, for example, it was the presence of students from the Ecole Supérieure d'Agriculture which provided the initial impetus. During a demonstration which the CGT tried at the last moment to divert from passing in front of the municipal theatre, students broke away and occupied it. Among them was René Bourrigaud:

'The theatre represented the acme of bourgeois culture in the town. Some anarchists — we didn't even know there were any in Angers — were the first in through the back door and raised the black flag over the building. Then we opened the doors, occupied the theatre. It became a permanent forum of debate. Workers came and took part — it was the first time they had ever set foot in this temple of bourgeois culture. Some of them spoke about their experiences during the Popular Front occupations of 1936. We only vaguely knew about that, we lacked real knowledge of the history of the working-class movement. In that month of talking you learnt more than in the whole of your five years studying. Learnt because you could talk to anyone and everyone. It was really another world — a dream world perhaps — but that's what I'll always remember: the need and the right for everyone to speak.'

People who had never found their voice before now spoke, acted in ways that would have been inconceivable a month earlier. In Lyons, France's third largest city, two 16-year-old girls brought out their high school on strike. Neither had been a political activist before. One of them, Claire Auzias, had spent the previous year at school in an American college. There she had found out about Vietnam, Black Power, the counter-culture. Returning to a French lycée, with its strong discipline and arbitrary authority, had been hard to take. 'So when my own school came out on strike, oh, it was marvellous! I wasn't afraid of anything, I was carried forward by the moment. After May '68 I've never again been able to speak at a public meeting. But then I could answer every argument, talk back to anybody. The teachers, even the headmaster of whom we'd all been afraid, were frightened now. I was carried along by this tremendous desire for revolution.'

During the strike and after, high school pupils working through their Comités d'Action Lycéens (CAL) carried their ideas on reorganising the high school system far further than did university students. The role of the lycée in society, the need to make the teaching and subjects relevant to real life, the question of examinations and grades — could the high school exist without them? — these and many other problems were earnestly debated. In Paris alone more than 300 reports on high school reform were drawn up in the last two weeks of May.

SOUS LES PAVÉS, LA PLAGE

BY RELEASING people from their 'normal' work and school routines, the general strike provided individuals with a unique opportunity to liberate themselves from day-to-day constraints. Time and space took on new meaning. People walked the cities in great numbers as public transport stopped and petrol became scarce; and as they walked, they struck up conversations with strangers in a way that would have been unimaginable before. For the first time, workers could tour their factories; public buildings were open to everyone; and park keepers no longer chased off young lovers lying on the grass in public gardens. Romance, sex seemed part of the air: students with rooms in the centre of towns left doors unlocked to give overnight shelter, and teenagers — following the example of some of the bolder high school youth, like Lily Métreaux during the earlier student street battles, no longer went home to sleep. 'I remember after a euphoric night of fighting the police, cars burning in the streets, I crashed out at a friend's in the Latin Quarter. My clothes were reeking of tear gas. In the morning I woke to find an unknown moustached face looking down at me. He asked me to have coffee and we became lovers; Mustapha Khayati, one of the Situationists who had written the famous tract *On the Poverty of Student Life . . .*'

Time was no longer the routine hours of a month earlier. Even the hands of some public clocks were removed in a gesture reminiscent of what had reportedly happened during the Paris Commune a century earlier. On street corners people stuck up posters expressing their criticisms of the established order. In the Gobelins, in Paris, local anarchists pasted up huge sheets of white paper on the walls. 'People would come and start writing what they had to say,' recalled André Liber, the Maoist student activist, 'and as they were writing other people would come up and disagree. Discussions flared up. A lot of funny things, a lot of bullshit, too, was said. But the point was, people were at long last expressing themelves, talking to each other. That was one of the great things about May.'

Despite the street battles and the constant denunciation of capitalism by the far-left groups, there was virtually no vandalism; very few shop windows were broken, and the crime rate dropped to an all-time low. Aggression seemed directed almost exclusively at the police; when street discussions became heated and threatened physical violence, the crowd almost always stepped in to put an end to it.

Although as a rule the far-left groups were preoccupied with liberating society as a whole and disregarded the aspect of self-liberation, there were exceptions, like Roland Castro, one of the UJC-ml leaders. From the start of the student revolt he disagreed with his group's line castigating the movement as 'petty-bourgeois'. 'I knew immediately I had to be part of this thing. I was involved in so much that even today I can't remember what happened when. I was totally happy. Besides, I fell in love — she was a Trotskyist, but who cared any more! That lovely phrase of Marx's about the Paris Commune sums it all up for me. "The only social measure of the Commune is its very existence," he said. That's what I felt — the fullness of being alive.'

EXCEPTIONAL times release unsuspected potentialities from the repressed depths of 'normal' times. The refusal of Gaullist power was lived as a liberation, an attempt to democratise power in the local workplace, for the most part. The only political organisation with the strength to link these local 'powers' into a coherent attack on the regime itself — the Communist Party — was instead determined to isolate the movement. Although links between strike committees were made in a number of regional cities, the difficulty of creating an organisational structure overnight meant that these links remained tenuous. The mass strike rolled on without coalescing into a political force which put itself forward as an alternative to the Gaullist regime.

Spontaneity, self-activity, was patently not enough. Attempts to establish these links cost tremendous personal effort. Cohn-Bendit, who went to Nantes to try to forge links with the Sud Aviaton workers, recalled that he was 'completely exhausted' by all that had happened in the past weeks. 'I accepted an invitation from students to go to Berlin because I liked the idea of returning there as a leader. It was pride, of course, but also to tell the truth I didn't know how to go forward. I needed to rest. In truth I didn't realise the importance of the moment.'

On the way back to France, he held a meeting in Holland at which he said, among other things, that the French flag was made to be ripped up and turned into a red flag. When he tried to cross the border, from Germany, he found he had been banned from France. 'The pretext was my statement about the French flag. Because I was German, they were entitled to do it. I didn't know what to do. There were a lot of journalists asking for interviews. The one from the BBC was a pretty young woman. I gave her the inteview and then disappeared with her. I'd become a star, lost contact with reality.'

Paris students marched on Parliament in protest at the banning;

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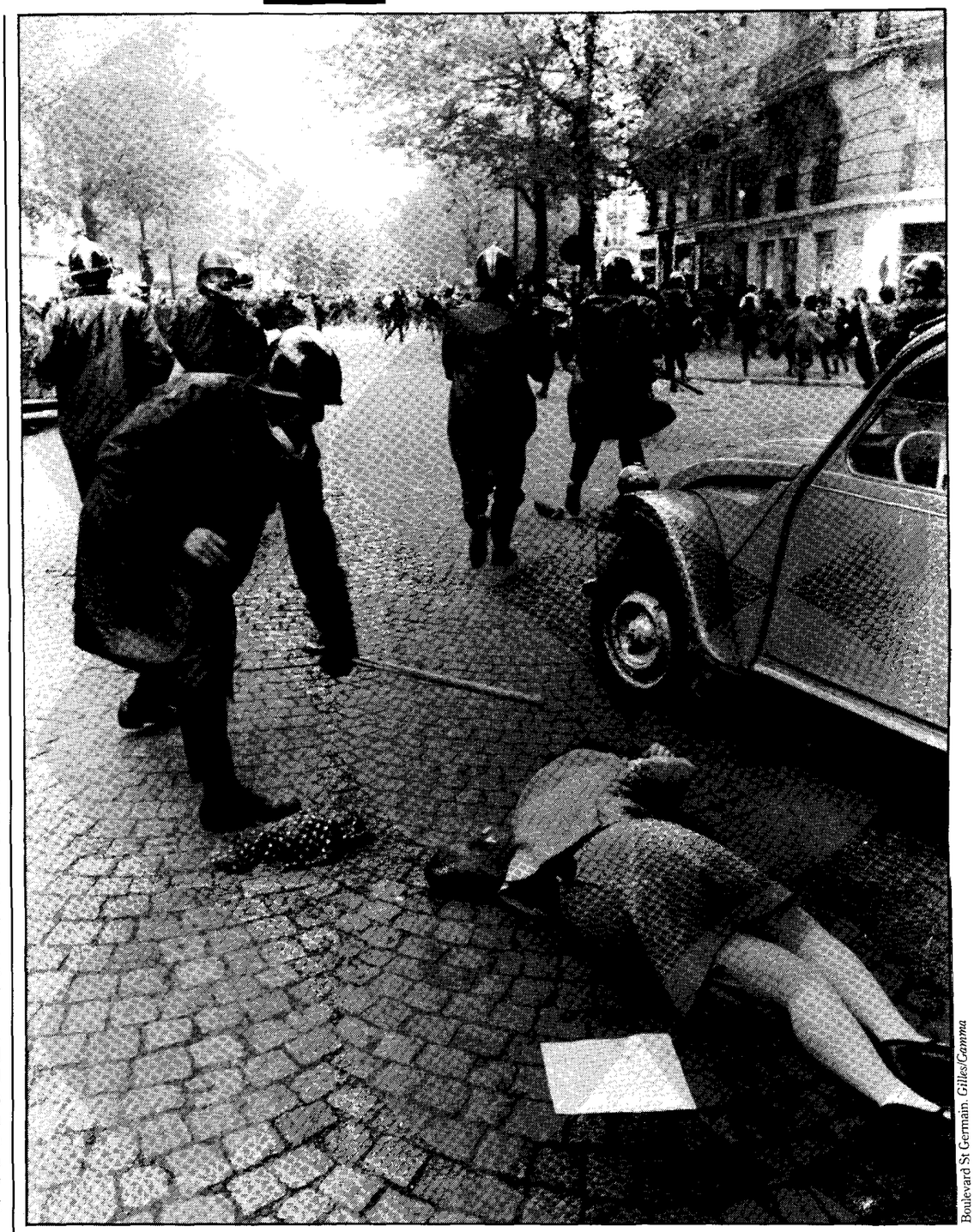
but power as it had always done in the Gaullist regime, plainly lay elsewhere — in de Gaulle's Elysée palace. There, a week after the strike had started, a two-pronged counter-attack was being planned: de Gaulle was to address the nation on 24 May, and a day later Prime Minister Pompidou would begin negotiations with the unions on economic demands.

Such was de Gaulle's power still in this highly centralised country that everything seemed to hang on his speech. On the day of the speech, anti-Gaullist demonstrations were held in many cities. Militants of the 22 March Movement went to factories in the Paris suburbs to bring workers to the centre for the demonstration. Ann Querrien went to a metal-working plant where she had contacts with skilled workers. 'On the way back I stopped to make myself a red flag from a piece of cloth and a broomstick. Then the few of us continued walking on into the centre of the city. By the time we got to the rallying point I was amazed to see that several thousand people had joined our group.'

Similar phenomena were happening elsewhere. In Lyons, for instance, a spontaneous demonstration by a couple of hundred students, claiming to represent the 22 March Movement, marched with black flags from the university. As soon as they crossed the river into the city, the demonstration swelled. 'In a few hundred yards it became enormous,' Francoise Routhier recalled. 'People from every walk of life were joining it, people who had nothing to do with students. It was as if the whole city had been waiting for it.'

And then Routhier and others at the front of the demonstration heard that youth from the underprivileged housing zones on the city outskirts were joining at the rear. 'I felt a collective shiver go through the demo. It was as if people from another world, people you normally never met in the city, were joining in.'



Boulevard St Germain. *Gilles/Gamma*

All over France, the demonstrators stopped to listen on transistor radios to de Gaulle's speech. As the 77-year-old General's voice came over the air it was rapidly apparent that he was unsure of himself, out of touch with the mood of the country. All he was offering was to seek reconfirmation of his old sweeping powers. As the speech ended, a Paris demonstrator raised a handkerchief over his head and shouted, 'Adieu de Gaulle!' Immediately, thousands of others followed the example. Then the police fired tear gas and the fighting broke out. It was to last all night.

On orders from their leaders, student demonstrators in Paris split into small groups, forcing the police to scatter too. One group found its path to the stock exchange clear and set fire to it with cries of 'Burn down the temple of capitalism!' Others fought their way back into the Latin Quarter where they took on the police in a battle even more ferocious than the 'night of the barricades'.

In Lyons, the demonstrators marched to the only remaining seat of power — the Préfecture — but found it surrounded by the entire regional police force. The demonstrators withdrew across the river and built a huge barricade across the bridge. 'Strategically, it was nonsense,' Routhier observed, 'because there are 32 bridges in Lyons. But everyone wanted to do something. Soon there were long lines of people passing cobblestones up to the barricade — it was like those pictures from China where thousands of people are carrying stones to build a dam . . .' Police began firing tear gas grenades. Youngsters from the city outskirts brought up a lorry in front of the barricade, jammed down the accelerator and sent it careering into the police lines through the dense tear gas. A police officer was crushed to death. It was, despite all the preceding violence, the first fatal casualty of May. The police officer was possibly trying to contact the 'leaders' of the demonstration as occasionally happened in Paris. 'But in Lyons,' Routhier observed, 'there were none. Everyone was a "leader" and no one.'

ON THE MORNING after the fighting, 25 May, the government had lost control of several important cities. De Gaulle himelf was discredited. Prime Minister Pompidou now played his last card: direct talks with the unions and employers in an historic replay of agreements which had brought an end to the Popular Front

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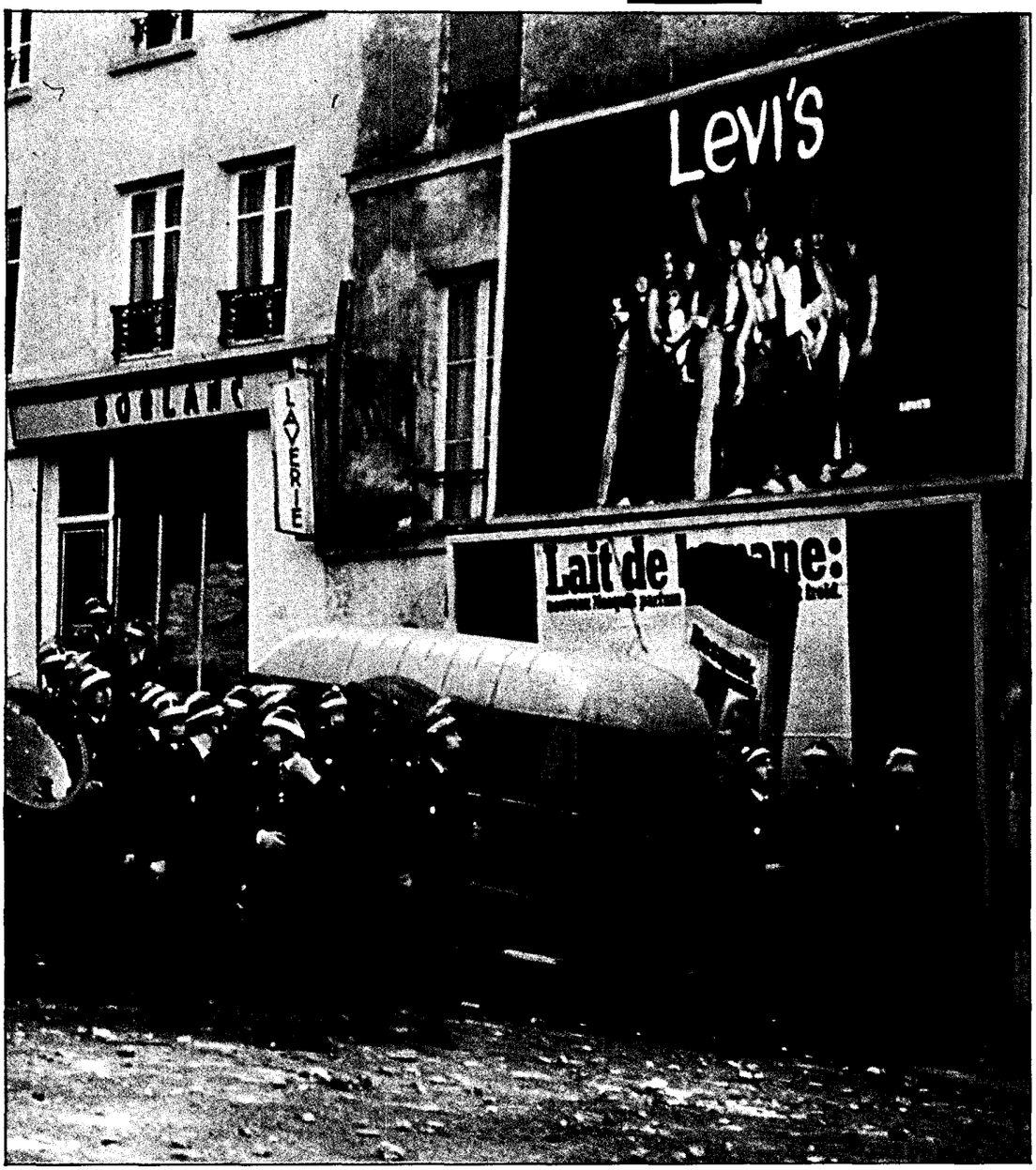

P. Rey/Gamma

occupations of 1936. At the same time there were rumours that tanks were taking up positions around the capital for a military take-over.

The talks went on through the weekend of 25-7 May. By their end Pompidou had conceded the greatest single increase in the minimum wage — 35 per cent — since the end of World War II. But the remainder of the working-class claims were left to further negotiation. Confident nonetheless of their victory, the trade union delegates emerged smiling; all that was needed was the rank-and-file's approval.

The threat of civil war was over. Georges Séguy, the CGT leader, hurried to the Renault automobile plant at Billancourt, one of the bastions of the strike, to present the agreements. The 10,000 workers listened. As he finished, whistles and derisory boos broke out: the agreements were unacceptable. The strike would continue!

As similar reactions poured in to trade union headquarters from all over France, it was evident that the strikers were demanding not simply wage increases but more radical changes. The agreements had failed, a pre-revolutionary power-crisis had opened. Two *de facto* powers now existed: the strike movement's and the regime's. The latter seemed to have played all its cards, but the ascendant movement was still searching for a credible political alternative.

While left policitians argued about the spoils of government, without giving a decisive lead on how, finally, to remove de Gaulle from power, the student movement tried to retake the initiative. UNEF, the student union, called a mass meeting at the small Charléty stadium in Paris. Thirty thousand people attended, among them many groups of workers who disagreed with the CGT's 'back-to-work' line. They heard a succession of speakers — including some Communist Party intellectuals who had torn up their membership cards — all urging the movement on; but none of them was able to put forward a clear line of action. The movement seemd unable to translate its social strength into a political force.

At the Sorbonne, general assemblies feverishly turned on the vital question of filling the political vacuum. On the evening of 28 May, an unknown young man, with dyed black hair and dark glasses walked to the microphone. It was Cohn-Bendit, who had returned to France clandestinely, using an old Algerian War resistance network; he felt he had to come back. 'All the way in the car to Paris I was wondering what to do, what to say, how to find a second wind . . . I went up front. There was no reaction. Then I took off my glasses. After a few seconds there was a tremendous ovation. People were standing, shouting: "les frontières on s'en fout!" ["Fuck all frontiers!"]. It went on a long time, my eyes filled with tears. But in fact I had nothing to say. The main point of my being there was to defy the government, show it was powerless. So I just said a few words, encouraging them to go on.'

BARELY HAD de Gaulle's stentorian 'Vive la France!' faded on the radio, than Gaullist supporters swarmed into the streets of Paris for a mass rally. The shareholder and the shopkeeper, the veteran of the colonial wars, the die-hard Catholic and the heir of Vichy France poured from the apartments where they had been sheltering for the past month to be joined by Gaullist MPs and government ministers who led them, reaction triumphant, up the Champs Elysées under a storm of French flags. Some 700,000 people, intoning the 'Marseillaise' — the other face of France, the face of Gaullism and of all that students and strikers had stood against for the past month.

Inspired by the General's refound determination, the regime fought to regain the power it had lost over the preceding weeks. Its first decisive move was to stock the petrol stations for the long Whitsun weekend beginning on 1 June. The traffic jams on the roads out of all the major cities was a certain sign that 'May' for the middle classes was over. The main petrol docks for Paris were in Gennevilliers where Yves Clément, a Maoist student, had spent May and seen the workers' militancy.

'They could have stopped the tankers loading the petrol, they had the means to do so. But they were also totally disciplined, all members of the CGT. When the union leadership — and that meant the Communist Party leadership — gave the order they raised hell. But eventually they complied.'

Although June was a month of bitterness, the sense of freedom won in May was not sacrificed that easily. The strike continued. The ranks of far-leftist organisations were swollen with new recruits. The regime's pseudo-democratic mask had been torn from its face; its archaic and arbitrary power stripped momentarily from it; its hierarchies, its mandarins, its class divisions and injustices revealed in a few fulminating weeks of 'criticism through action'. Those who had experienced this liberation were not prepared to stop. The students' immediate task was to support the workers and peasants who were still resisting the regime.

On Wednesday, 29 May, the crisis reached its height. A massive, CGT-led demonstration, chanting anti-

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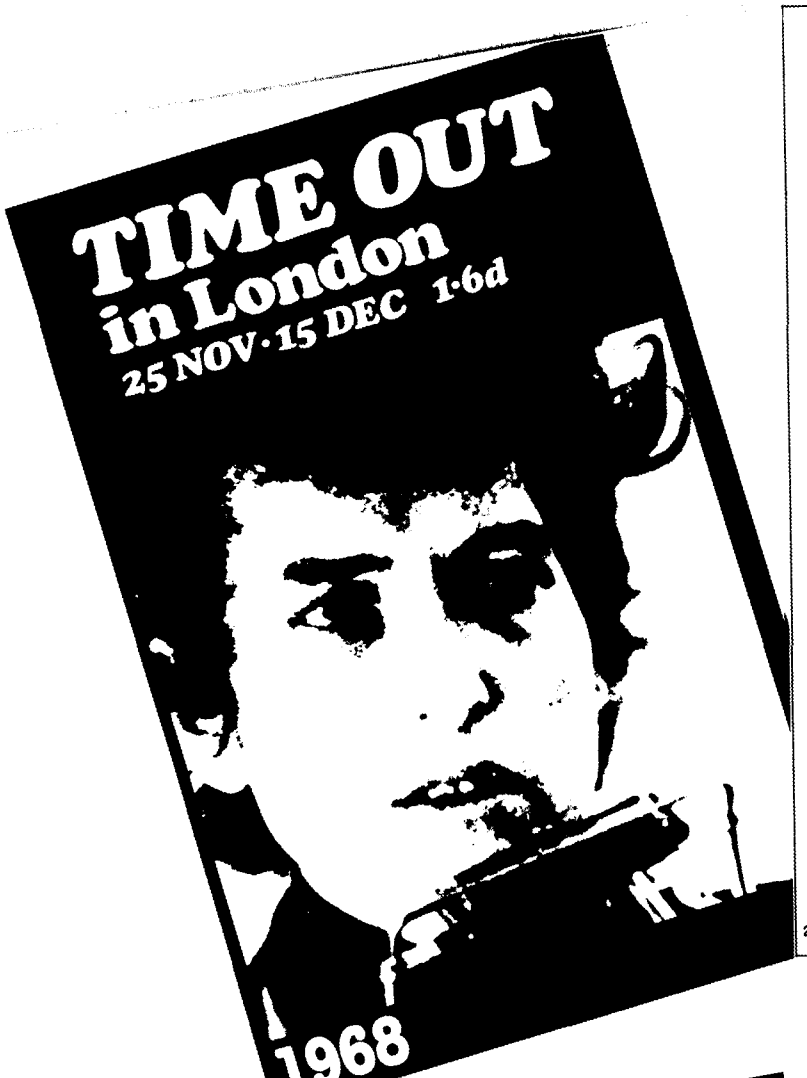


GROUP DATES

ACTION
29 Nov **East London Technical College** Commercial Street EC1 (Nearest Tube: Aldgate East) Entrance by Student Union cards only.
30 **Imperial College**: Prince Consort Rd SW7. (NUS Cards only) High St Ken Tube.

ANDROMEDA
22 Nov **Country Club**, 210a Haverstock Hill NW3. (Belsize Park Tube)

BARCLAY JAMES HARVEST
7 Dec **Imperial College**

BATTERED ORNAMENTS
28 Nov **Battersea Town Hall**, Battersea Pk Rd SW11 (Clapham North Tube, 396 bus)
6 Dec **Fishmongers Arms**, 287 High Road, Wood Green N22. (Wood Green tube)
8 **Guildford Civic Hall** (see'events')

BEACH BOYS
1 Dec **London Palladium**, Gt Marlborough St W1 (Oxford Circus tube)
8 **Astoria**, Finsbury Park (Finsbury Park tube)

THE BEATLES
14–21 Dec **Three 'live' concerts at the Roundhouse** Chalk Farm Rd NW1

BONZO DOG DOO DAH BAND
8 Dec **London Palladium**, 'Save Rave' Charity Concert.

BLONDE ON BLONDE
12 Dec **London College of Fashion**, 20 Princess St W1 (Oxford Circus Tube)

MAMA CASS
8 Dec **London Palladium**

CIRCUS
10 Dec **Kings College**, Strand WC2 NUS Cards only (Strand tube)
11 **Hatchetts**, Piccadilly, W1 (Piccadilly Circus tube)

CREAM
26 Nov **Royal Albert Hall**. Two 'farewell' concerts. All tickets **sold.**

ECLECTION
8 Dec **Astoria** Finsbury Park

FAIRPORT CONVENTION
30 Nov **LSE**, Houghton Street WC2 (Holborn tube)
7 **Ewall Technical College**, Epsom. NUS Cards only. (Trains from Waterloo)
10 **Marlows**, High St, Hemel Hempstead
12 **100 Club**, 100 Oxford St W1 (Oxford Circus tube)

FAMILY
26 Nov **Fishmongers Arms**
27 **City of London College**, Moorgate EC2 NUS Cards only.
3 Dec **Marquee**, 90 Wardour St W1 (Tott Ct Rd and Oxford Circus tubes)
7 **Regent Street Polytechnic**, Regent St W1. NUS Cards only (Oxford Cir. tube)

CHICKEN SHACK
7 Dec **Loughborough University**
10 **Fishmongers Arms**
12 **London College of Fashion**

ELMER GANTRY'S VELVET OPERA
30 Nov **University College**, Gower St WC1 NUS Cards only. (Euston Square tube)

THE GUNN
28 Nov **Kingston College of Art**, Knights Pk, Kingston-Upon-Thames. NUS cards only.
29 **Fishmongers Arms**
7 Dec **Middle Earth**, Roundhouse, Chalk Farm Road, NW1 (Chalk Farm tube)
8 **Country Club**

IDLE RACE
4 Dec **London Hospital Medical School**, *Ashfield St E1. NUS cards only.*

JETHRO TULL
26 Nov **Marquee**
28 **Kingston College**
29 **Warwich University**
30 **LSE**

JUNIORS EYES
25 Nov **Black Bull**, Whetstone N20 (Finchley Cen tube, 261 bus)
4 Dec **Eel Pie Island**, Twickenham (Richmond tube, Twick. S. Region)
7 **Ewall Technical College**
8 **Wellington College**, Guildford

MIKE COTTON
Nov 30 **Bath University**
Dec **Essex University**

LOVE SCULPTURE
7 Dec **University College**

MOODY BLUES
11 Dec **University College**

MOVE
6 Dec **Queen Mary College**, Mile End Rd (Mile End Tube) NUS cards only
8 **London Palladium**

NICE
8 Dec **London Palladium**
10 **Kings College**

BOBBY PARKER
29 Nov **Marquee**
3 Dec **Klooks Kleek**, Railway Hotel, 100 W Hampstead Lane NW6 (W Hampstead tube)
7 **Conway Hall**, Red Lion Square WC1 (Holborn tube)
9 **Crooks Ferry Inn**, Edmonton N20

PINK FLOYD
24 Nov **Country Club**
29 **Bedford College**, Regents Park NW1 NUS cards only

PRETTY THINGS
28 Nov **Kingston College**
12 Dec **Waltham Forest Technical College** E17

AS TIME GOES BY...

MUSIC: ROCK, REGGAE, SOUL, JAZZ, FOLK AND COUNTRY

10

THURSDAY

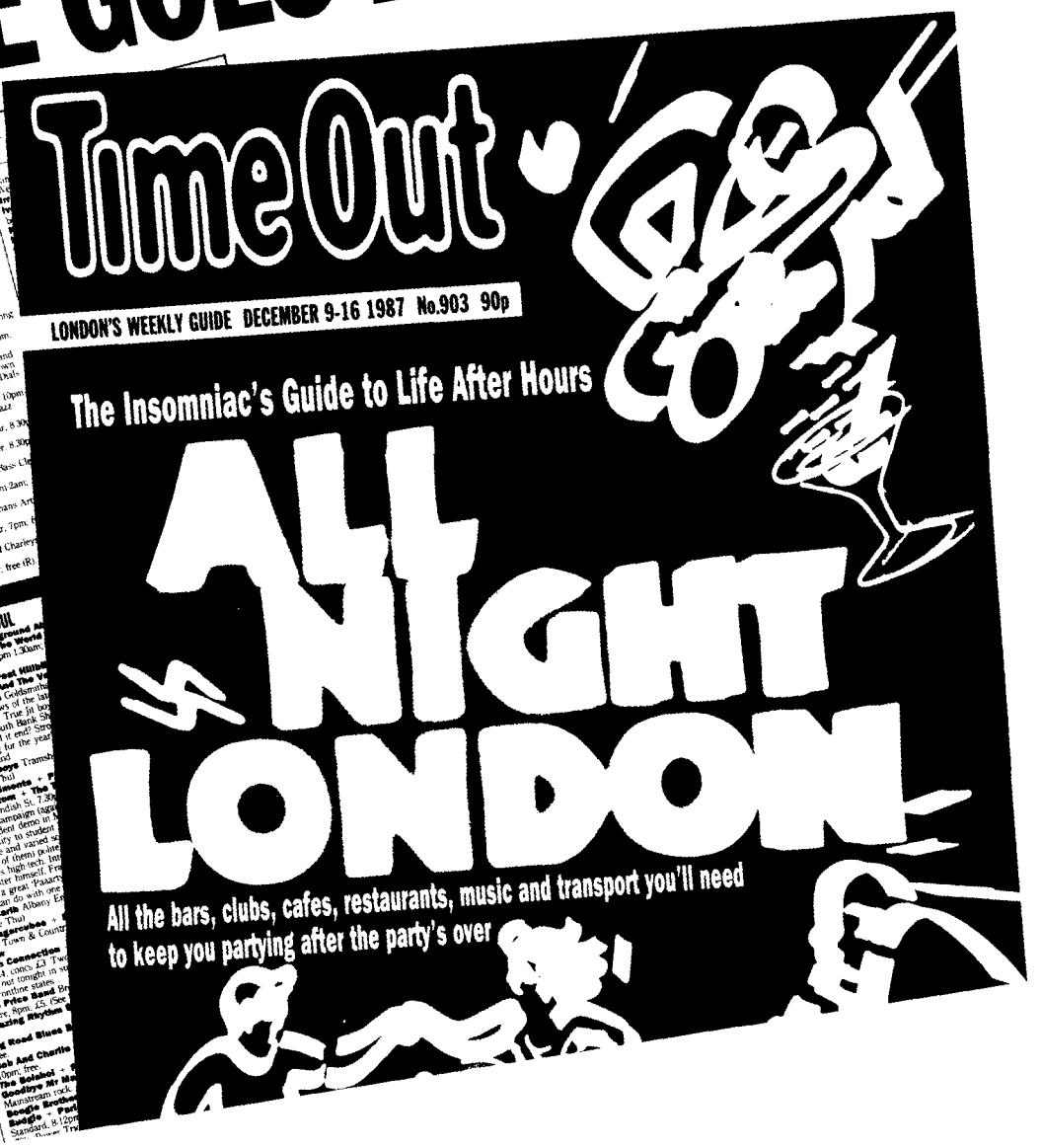
ROCK, REGGAE & SOUL

JAZZ & LATIN

FOLK & COUNTRY

FRIDAY

ROCK, REGGAE & SOUL


Time Out
LONDON'S WEEKLY GUIDE DECEMBER 9-16 1987 No.903 90p
The Insomniac's Guide to Life After Hours
ALL NIGHT LONDON
All the bars, clubs, cafes, restaurants, music and transport you'll need to keep you partying after the party's over

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Gaullist slogans, walked peacefully through the streets of Paris. Members of the government feared it would march on the presidential palace and take it, but that was not the Communist Party's goal; its aim was rather to show Socialist politicians that any future government would have to include the Communists. Almost simultaneously news broke that the palace was empty, de Gaulle had vanished. His regime appeared lost, victory in the grasp of those who had fought it for the past month.

In barely 24 hours it eluded them again. The old General moved faster and more decisively than they in a single day. He flew to West Germany to assure himself of the loyalty of the French there. Having received the necessary assurances, he flew back determined to make his final counter-attack.

The following day, 30 May, he broadcast to the nation. At the Sorbonne someone with a transistor radio walked into the classroom where Pierre Félix was debating proposals on university reform. ' "De Gaulle is going to speak," I heard him say. The afternoon sun was streaming into the room, lighting up the words — *déjà dix jours de bonheur!* [ten days of happiness already!] — which someone had written on the wall. I felt the same. I turned to listen. The old man's authoritarian voice came loud and clear. "Eh bien, non! Je ne me retirerai pas!" (No, I shall not stand down!") And then in a voice veiled with hidden threats against any attempt to dispute his power, he barked out his new orders: parliament would be dissolved, general elections called, the armed forces mobilised under the authority of the local *préfets*. He spoke for only four minutes, his voice like thunder. We looked at each other, wondering what this upping of the political stakes meant. An East European émigré among us, who I suppose knew more about the real meaning of power than we, said quite simply: "It's all over now." As I looked at the wall the words were lost in shadow.'

In Paris, the Student-Worker-Peasant Liason Committee (CLEOP), a Maoist initiative, now attracted some new, non-Maoist recruits. With 5,000 francs collected in the streets, Pierre Félix and fellow students bought large supplies of potatoes, bananas, powdered milk from the Paris wholesale market on CLEOP's behalf. Lorries delivered these to the courtyard of the Agronomy Institute. The students informed factory strike committees that supplies were available and they came to pick them up. Everything was sold at cost. 'Many of the strikers were as astonished as us to discover the difference between wholesale and retail prices,' Félix recalled. Although the system worked well, it was criticised by members of the 22 March Movement, who turned up one day, for copying the existing commercial distribution network. 'We should instead be helping the strike committees to help themselves, they said. That's to say, show them the way to the wholesale market and let them work it out for themselves. Not only would they learn more that way but their "exemplary action" would spread to other factories.' Convinced, the committee thereafter took workers to the wholesale market in the early mornings to show them how to buy food.

The CLEOP Maoist leadership was meanwhile devoting itself to the peasantry; it had left factory supplies in the hands of non-Maoists, as Félix discovered, after a serious 'political error'. Plans to distribute free to shantytown dwellers a lorryload of 'liberated' chicken went badly awry when the lorry was stormed and the denizens made off with as many chickens as possible. 'The comrades had "over-estimated the level of consciousness of the masses". Having made their self-criticism , they were now re-orientating their activities to the "poorest strata of the peasantry," ' Félix explained.

But the peasantry in the conservative eastern region of France where they focused their campaign were no more accessible to their propaganda than the shantytown dwellers, as they were obliged to recognise in a report back to CLEOP. 'In one small town they had unfurled their red flags in the market place, displayed a picture of Mao and distributed leaflets,' Félix recalled. 'Peasants gathered with apparent interest round their lorry. A woman comrade took the loudspeaker and began: "Comrade peasants!" Hardly had she uttered the words when "the masses" began running in all directions, some of them shouting, "I'm going for my gun!" The Maoists had to beat a hasty retreat. "The conclusions to be drawn from this action, comrades," summed up the head of the CLEOP-political section, "is that we must absolutely revise our methods of work. As Chairman Mao-Tse-Tung said . . ." '

TIME, HOWEVER, for such *revisions* or indeed new initiatives was running out. The movement's failure to fill the power vacuum before de Gaulle again seized the initiative opened the floodgates to reaction. The regime began sending in police to clear out the strikers in public services — a move that was initially unsuccessful. Needing a decisive victory, the government picked on the Renault factory of Flins, near Paris, where, in a surprise move, the CRS evicted the strikers. But even there they had not counted on the workers' resistance: for four days workers, aided by students who rushed out from Paris, battled the police in the surrounding countryside. It was the first time during May that workers *en masse* fought the police. But the CRS eventually won the battle, and this marked the beginning of the end for the general strike.

Finally, in the third week of June, the Gaullist regime won a massive victory in the general elections. Socialists and Communists lost half their former parliamentary seats. Failure to carry a movement forward rarely wins votes once the ruling order is firmly back in the saddle. Using its control of television, the Gaullist regime played blatantly on the alleged threat of a 'Communist seizure of power' during the recent events to frighten voters into a realisation of where their actions might have led. Nothing could have been further from the truth, but the Communist Party had now to pay the price of its policies. Many of the radicalised youth were under the voting age of 21; as many, perhaps, refused to vote in elections that they considered a fraud. The grip of ruling-class ideology had received a rude blow; but it had not been overturned. The impossibility of creating ongoing structures of self-management, new social organisms, meant that there was no realistic projection of the new forms of organisation that had sprung up during May. Instead, bourgeois 'normality' returned: the sovereign general assembly in which everyone could speak gave way to the sovereign individual who, in the silence of marking his or her solitary vote, was asked to be heard from once in only every so many years.□

MAI 68 C'EST VIEUX, 86 C'EST MIEUX

In the middle of the French student protests at the end of 1986, the daily paper *Libération* organised a discussion with young activists. One of the topics was May '68.

'May '68 means black and white films of people fighting in the streets — blokes with long hair and hard words — very sure of themselves, very courageous. Not a lot of laughs.'

'It was the absolute rejection of victimisation, it was general euphoria. But it was also the violence and decadence that marked the end of '68.'

'It was really great — young, exuberant, violent. I've seen some good films on '68 and it took me a while to understand just how violent it was. So young! So wild! Sure, a lot of rich kids had the time of their lives. But why not? We all got something out of it.'

'You're coming up for 40, so you decide to get your hair cut and buy a suit and tie. Sure, why not, if that's what you want. But spare us the cynical rewrites of your own memories.'

'The result of May '68 is that today everyone's petit-bourgeois.'

'It certainly made a lot of difference to my adolescence. My parents put up with a lot of things from me and my friends that their parents would never have tolerated.'

'May '68 made everyone aware that you can always challenge authority. It brought free speech to the campuses, and knocked the teachers off their pedestals.'

'We don't want the violence of May '68 because we've got more than enough as it is, from hard rock concerts to cops searching you on the métro, from Le Pen to TV. The '60s can't have been *this* violent!

This chapter is taken from *1968* by Ronald Fraser, which will be published by Chatto on 11 January at £14.95.

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Don't drop your zipper for the gipper

San Francisco State College, 1968. *Nacio Jan Brown/BBM*

Bobby Seale writes cookbooks, Jerry Rubin is obsessed by his body and bank balance, and whatever Eldridge Cleaver's now doing probably doesn't bear thinking about. But Abbie Hoffman, 51 years old, is still pissing on the establishment. Elgy Gillespie rapped with him, in a hotel somewhere in Amerika

AT THE MOMENT Abbie Hoffman is deeply pissed, in the American sense. The *New York Times* has taken a whole six weeks to review his ninth book, *Steal This Urine Test,* then called it 'important' in three inches. It sucks, he says. 'Kills it stone dead,' he growls. And in every one of the scores of interviews for papers and TV shows he's done lately, the hacks don't read it and then they ask him why he is pro-drugs, when drugs kill? And they ask him if he is having an affair with Amy Carter.

'And nah, they didn't name any boulevards after me yet! Named a few canaries and babies, though,' grunts the '60s boffo radical with his eye on the '90s.

Sprawled across his hotel bed, resisting the urge to pick his nose, he is instantly recognisable. Age cannot wither the radical for all seasons, now 51, even if custom has spread a balding patch in the idealism of the 78 million American Baby Boomers of the '60s.

The wire-haired hero of the Chicago Seven is still a Groucho-Marxist and never claimed to be the other kind, although he has actually read some Marx. It was Abbie who posted dead fish into bank deposit boxes, Abbie who founded the Yippies, Abbie who told the cops his address was Woodstock, Abbie who told Judge Julius C. Hoffman that he was his 'illegitimate father'. The '60s were good to Abbie Hoffman.

But he also thinks of himself as 'an old Jewish road warrior' and 'an American leftist' and a 'grassroots community organiser'. It's been a long, lonely road, says he. Hollywood could never replay it, which is another reason he regrets calling his autobiography *Soon To Be A Major Motion Picture.* There are kids who have never heard of him on campuses now, all wearing Benetton and Esprit. He pities them for having missed the best. Abbie's in his old rust polo-neck, says he makes no money, and owns no possessions — though he refuses to divulge much more on that score. He does not say how much he made on his Baedecker to the Revolution, *Steal This Book.* He does say that he had to publish it himself. (Booksellers are still griping about it.)

His latest book is about the 'bladder cops' and the complex issue of drug tests. Back in 1971, Hoffman was wanted on a drug peddling rap. He went into hiding, first abroad posing as a food reviewer, and then in small-town America for seven years. He had plastic surgery ('I looked like Robert Redford before') and organised a grassroots protest under an alias in upstate New York. In 1980 he turned himself in, and did a small community work sentence, then picked up a new living as public speaker to rotary clubs, sewing bees and student unions. He even did a bit of stand-up comedy in the Borsch Belt (comedy clubs in the Catskills where Jewish retirees tongue-lash budding wits,)

Being Lenny Bruce really suits him, and they should probably have changed places. Bruce was more serious. 'Hey, serious isn't the opposite of funny!' laughs Abbie, accused of being an entertainer by me. His 50th year brought him a particularly thrilling bunch of midlife crises and the possibility of a new jail sentence. There was his arrest with Amy Carter and the Brown University anti-CIA recruitment students, his new show *Radio Free USA* ('Like all good ideas, it ran out of bucks') his campaign to save the River Delaware, for which the state of Pennsylvania took away his vote . . . and this book. He confidently awaits the revival of the counter-culture, if not the revolution.

Urine tests, he says, are 'the loyalty oaths of the '80s'. Drugs are the communism of the decade. 'My point is far more complex. Drugs are not good or bad in themselves — it's your relationship with drugs, and, by the way, that includes food and air.' While still a clinical psychologist at a state mental hospital, he treated

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people who got high by air-swallowing. In his time Hoffman, who is a friend of R. D. Laing, tried every drug he could lay his hands upon except cyanide. Like Judge Ginsberg, he will flunk the front bench of the Supreme Court. 'Drug-tests have really become a metaphor for what's going on in America today, and an excuse to take peoples' jobs away.' So the logical response is to match what he calls ''80s entrepreneurialism' with '60s activism.

Seven publishers turned the book down and his friends begged him not to write it. Originally Hoffman wanted to tape a packet of dried urine from Texas to each copy (from the Nightbyrd company of Austin, whose motto is 'oil put Texas on top — urine can keep it there!'). Although it boasts of being the urine of spinster librarians, choirboys with unbroken voices and nuns, Penguin-Viking did not go for it — strangely. Instead, it posed him in a 'Just Say No!' T-shirt holding a jar of his own for the cover.

'I'm the world expert on urine' brags the man who coined the slogan 'Don't drop your zipper for the Gipper!' He believes that anti-drug hysteria under the Reagans has triggered a vast and costly hoax. The tests have a one-in-four margin of error, are big business, and ensuing lawsuits from unfair dismissals are making more big business. He sees drug tests as simply an abuse of civil liberty. The book obliged him to spend much of the year inside forensic labs and draw on his long-forgotten career as Mrs Hoffman's son the doctor. Recently he sent a barrel of urine to the White House, claims he got hold of William Casey's last urine test ('Morphine. Of course.') and devotes an entire chapter in his book on how to cheat urine tests. How to be a piss-artist, you might say (though that phrase has no resonance here in America, because the word 'piss' has less currency.)

The harshest tale of drug-wars erasing young life in the ghetto bounces off him. He poo-poos figures of drug overdose deaths and he seems to feel those who are not with him are agin him. Though Abbie himself gave up smoking — fags, that is — years ago, he still takes the odd drink, Jack Daniels tonight. But he recommends fasting for a true high. 'One of the great experiences of my life, actually. But hard, if you're not in jail.'

Okay — so what about former First Daughter Amy Carter, who featured tossing her hair in all the photos of their Amherst, Massachusetts trial last spring for an anti-CIA recruitment protest? Abbie is bored of being cast as her Svengali, yet brings her name up in speeches.

'We're not an item,' he grunts, justly riled at being baited again. 'But I tellya, that lady'll be around for a long, long time. She's for the long haul, like me.' As a matter of fact, Abbie's own daughter Amy is just a few years older than the Carter administration advisor on nuclear disarmament, who is 20. Later while on his way to explain to some earnest students who remember not to call him 'sir' how different and better things were for the young in the'60s, he pauses at the inevitable question again and mutters, 'She plays with her hair too much.' I'd say he's crazy about her.

But will he get his new SDS student party off the ground next February in Rutgers, New Jersey? It's hard to fight when there isn't a war on, even when Reagan and the CIA make it easy for you, he concedes. And there is too much grief in writing books, he thinks, and though he speaks well, unlike most writers, it isn't what he thinks he does best. He thinks he brings people together best. 'I'm no gadfly. I'm the best goddam grassroots organiser in the country. And the most modest, may I add.'

Rudely, I pop the word 'entrepreneurial' into the air: one of Abbie's own words about the '80s, actually. Stung, smarting, he looks away and there is a pause. To joke or not to joke: that is always the question. Finally he shrugs. 'There are enough goddam entrepreneurs in this country already. Thousands upon thousands. They don't need me.' □

'. . . this sense of freedom and possibility — which is for the course of the '60s a momentarily objective reality, as well as (from the hindsight of the '80s) a historical illusion — may perhaps best be explained in terms of the superstructural movement and play enabled by the transition from one infrastructural or systemic stage of capitalism to another. The '60s were in that sense an immense and inflationary issuing of superstructural credit; a universal abandonment of the referential gold standard; an extraordinary printing up of ever more devalued signifiers. With the end of the '60s, with the world economic crisis, all the old infrastructural bills then slowly come due once more; and the '80s will be characterised by an effort, on a world scale, to proletarianise all those unbound social forces which gave the '60s their energy, by an extension of class struggle, in other words, into the farthest reaches of the globe.'
Fredric Jameson, 'Periodising the '60s', from *The '60s Without Apology*

Seven reflections on '68

Anthony Barnett follows the marathon of revolution to its Thatcherite finishing-line.

ONE

YOU CAN SEE 1968 as something that students did, that they 'made'. One of the slogans of the time was that 'the duty of a revolutionary is to make the revolution'. I had just stopped being a graduate student, and was obsessed with taking action. Like many, I searched for some kind of strategy, really a path, that would lead to change. Perhaps I was fortunate to be slightly less crazy than some of my friends (even if I was sufficiently bizarre to be an editor of *New Left Review*). Looking back, I am conscious of the tremendous amount of talent and life-force that was broken, dispersed and even lost — some literally were to jump from the cliff-top.

But '68 was not something we did. If we thought so this was self-deception. Rather it happened to us. We declared ourselves its subjects and its consciousness. In fact we were its objects, blind rather than seeing. It was great, it was frightful, it was strange. Above all, things seemed uncontrollably new. We were very young, yet the older generation seemed to have nothing to offer except grey suits and Harold Wilson (oh yes, and Edward Heath).

I'm proud to have been part of it, but I blush slightly as I recall how we debated whether everyone over 30 was historically redundant — 'finished'. We pretended to be hyper-confident then, but looking back, I stroke my chin sagely and see that we were also children wandering in the forest of history.

It was a historic moment. Even if it led to Mrs Thatcher — as it did, which I'll come to. Tom Nairn wrote a marvellous essay at the time, called *The Beginning of the End*. He was a lecturer (soon to be sacked) at Hornsey College of Art, and shared in the occupation of the College with students. In these heroic circumstances, he wrote that the whole of previous history, from the stone age to 1950, had come to an end. Now a new species of humans had stepped out onto the earth, with an unprecedented urban, educated and television culture: us. We were sure that we were at the start of an epoch.

But this self-confidence hid the fact that really we had little idea what to make of this new world. The more strongly you felt that you were in the vanguard of progress — to where? to what? — the more likely you were (especially if male) to latch on to an already existing answer, an authority, a beacon to light the way. Many of us who were the most forward, looked backwards. Many a sixty-eighter put his eyes where his arse should have been (or was it vice-versa?). There are a number of stories I could tell about this. But it would mean starting up old fights. I want to reflect on '68 not fight over it (well, *part* of me still wants to have it out, but not in the Christmas issue). And although the women's movement and feminism started *after* 1968, it was a true product of that time because it was original, and sought its own answers. To do so it also retreated from the maelstrom.

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Many held this in contempt, but it was a sound response. For we were being swept along by forces over which we had no control and little understanding.

TWO

I WAS told a story about Cambodia: The year is uncertain. It was probably closer to 1965 than 1968, but anyway it was before the American invasion of 1969 that drew Cambodia into a devastating war. Prince Sihanouk was constantly on the radio. Although quite young (he had been put on the throne as a boy by the French colonialists in 1941) he referred to Cambodians as 'my children'. His squeeky voice, his vanity and presumption, seemed unbearable. Meanwhile, one could lierally hear the B-52s bombing over the border in Vietnam. Sihanouk was always going on about 'the Khmer Rouge', a term he invented himself for communists allegedly in the jungle and uninhabited savanna forests.

One day a student could bear it no more. Ashamed of being subject to this wretched compere, who manipulated everything, he took to the forests to join the Khmer Rouge. He caught a bus as far as he could go, then set out on foot.

At first he found no one who could tell him about the Khmer Rouge, nor any sign of their presence. Eventually, after some days and already worried about food, he came across another student.

He too was searching for the resistance movement in the tropical conditions of the Cambodian wild. The two of them joined up and together they carried on, beginning to live off nuts and fruit.

Until they came across a third erstwhile student, also looking, somewhat desperately, for the Khmer Rouge.

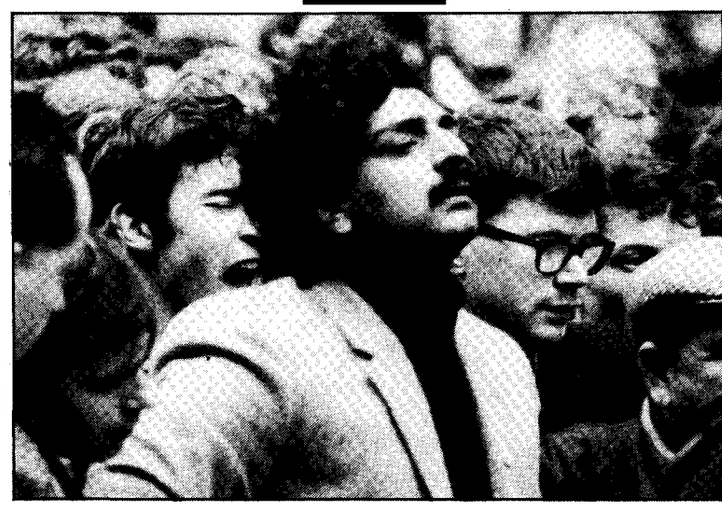
Now a group, they continued their search, hot and increasingly dispirited. They walked and walked, thirsty then dehydrated until, ill and exhausted, they decided that they were not good enough to find the Khmer Rouge, that they did not have sufficient spirit and stamina.

So they turned towards the nearest settlement they could find, and went to the local official to see if he could help them return to their homes. Naturally, he placed them under arrest and radioed to the capital. He was put through to the Prince.

'Ah', said Sihanouk, 'You see, I told you so, the Khmer Rouge!'

THREE

THERE ARE a number of morals to this story. First, the way the young students didn't realise that they



Tariq Ali, 1968. *Romano Cagnoni/Report*

themselves were what they were looking for. Perhaps this was because if they *were* what it was that they were looking for, then they were done for.

Second, their search was a response to the unbearable pressure of being conscious of what was going on. Especially in Vietnam: the bloody backdrop, where years of unequal fighting between the American colossus and the Vietnamese inspired some youngsters to emulate the Viet Cong and others to try and stop the war.

But also, Vietnam was a symbol of a world process, which students (especially first generation students concerned to retain a loyalty to their origins) often felt about passionately. In a way '68 was not just a movement of campus revolts in dozens of countries, it was also about the identity of the world.

This consciousness was not close to that of the traditional working class, or peasantry, even though these classes become objects of romantic attachment for many of the '68 generation. But their demise as classical class forces was sounded loud and clear in 1968. Maybe their replacements will have a wider perspective. At any rate, unofficial *ideas* became politics at that time.

Third, there *were* Khmer Rouge. Way up in the northernmost provinces, on the Vietnam-Lao border, there was Pol Pot. In the end he and his group did capture the loyalty of young militants and lead them to their deaths. In other words, the search for a pre-given leadership, for the existing, extreme opposites of the complacent bourgeois regimes so detested by the young of '68, lead many into the arms of the past with a vengeance. In the end it wasn't very funny.

FOUR

COULD MY Cambodian story be mythological? I was told it in the early '70s in Paris, before the Khmer Rouge had revealed their colours. Anyway, here is a true character from the story of '68.

Deniz Gezmiş, was one of the leaders of the student occupation at the university in Istanbul. Everybody loved him, he was so full of energy and self-assurance. After the military intervention, he helped to form the Turkish Peoples' Liberation Army.

They robbed a couple of banks to get funds. Their most famous escapade was wonderfully symbolic, not least of the competence of a generation. They decided to strike a blow against American imperialism in general and its large numbers of bases in Turkey in particular. So in a daring night-time operation they kidnapped a US serviceman. When they got him into the light, they saw he was a black. So out of solidarity with his oppressed brothers they released him!

In 1972 Deniz was captured and executed. The Turkish poet Can Yücel wrote his epitaph, a brilliant, back-handed compliment:

You were the finest hundred yards sprinter
In the long marathon of the revolution

FIVE

A COUPLE of years ago I picked up a student magazine in a university bookshop. There was an article in it on the '60s, which I turned to. It began by saying what a great time it must have been; things are not like those days any more. Just as my breast was swelling with satisfaction, I came to the student author's proof that my own young days were best: 'In the '60s' — he was barely able to contain his jealousy — 'they made really good James Bond films.'

Deniz Gezmiş, was real, yet his short life was a sort of phantasy. James Bond was fiction, but if any one person was actually the symbol, not of '68, that would be quite unfair, but of the '60s, it was he. Bond was the man of that decade.

James Bond, I have argued (in one of those unpublished drafts that I now realise are attempts to sort out what the hell is going on) is the perfect Thatcherite. On the one hand he represents the strong state, and on the other he is free of all regulation: 'Licensed to kill'. A perfect individualist, who is also an avid consumer of commodities and high technology, Bond represents freedom and gets the goodies, not to speak of the girls.

There is an obvious opposition between Bond and his values and Gezmiş and what he died for. But there is also a connection between them. The '60s — the decade that produced the year — was about that connection.

SIX

WHICH IS why it could lead to Mrs Thatcher.

SEVEN

IT SEEMED that '68 had been defeated everywhere.

—In February, in Saigon, the Tet Offensive was a supreme expression of a popular rising and destroyed support for the War in the United States. From then on it was a matter of withdrawal. But in Vietnam itself the indigenous base of the Viet Cong was annihilated.

—In May, in Paris, the student barricades and the workers' strike that followed and so surprised Europe were equally swiftly defeated politically, and ultimately introduced the Americanisation of France, to use the phrase of Régis Debray.

—In August, in Prague, Soviet tanks rolled into Czechoslovakia, to crush the liberty of socialism.

—In August too, in Chicago, student riots against the war helped ensure that Nixon won the Presidential election in November. He was dedicated to reversing the Vietnam verdict if he could.

But these were different kinds of defeat. In Europe and America, '68 confirmed the end of colonialism, and prevented the USA from becoming an imperial power of the traditional kind. But in the East the old regimes of Brezhnev and Mao were consolidated. This was a double defeat for the Left because, thanks in part to us, the West embraced the energy, the individualism and the radicalism of the '60s. But in the form of reactionary rather than progressive radicalism. While official socialism succeeded in suppressing the new freedom announced so noisily in 1968. □

Anthony Barnett is the consultant for Andy Metcalf's C4 film *Blast From the Past*

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Dreams and realities

The situationists wanted everyone to live in their own cathedral. The Leninists/Trotskyists/Maoists wanted the dictatorship of the nearest proletariat. Certain French railway workers, apparently, wanted Simone Signoret. And everyone wanted control over their own lives. Sheila Rowbotham reflects on the demands of '68, and their legacy.

AFTER THE UPSURGE of 1968 died down, it was all too easy to regard it as a mere spasm of unreality. In reaction against the extreme democracy and spontaneism of the French and other student movements, the directive role of the revolutionary party, a dismissal of learning through doing, and a preoccupation with theory for its own sake were all reasserted on the left. Today, in a period of defeat and disarray, demands for the impossible and an emphasis on the power of subjectivity in action can seem eccentric preoccupations.

Yet the situationists, a small group which had considerable influence in France and some influence elsewhere, claimed that the leftism of '68 simply theorised the movement of *events*. They distinguished themselves from both the anarchists, who they thought merely codified political wishes, and the orthodox communists, who presented theory as a scientific system which set out the laws of society's evolution. Instead the role of leftist theory was to enlarge understanding of action and struggle.

Their claims are partly validated by the persistence of many of the preoccupations of '68 in contemporary movements. The eruption of '68 altered the contours of politics in ways we could not foresee at the time, but to a certain extent we are still living in the midst of the contradictory forces which crystallised two decades ago. Those rebellions were not simply coincidental. The attempt to understand their purport is not just nostalgia.

The best known story of '68 is that of the students. If some ideas from the student movement — like the view of the university as a factory, or as a 'red base' for intellectual guerrillas — have hardly stood the test of time, others certainly have. The critique of the integration of higher education with the demands of capitalist production and the subordination of research to the dictates of militarism and the market have an obvious contemporary relevance.

But ideas converged from many sources in 1968. They were not confined to higher education. Their roots can be traced a long way back, to dissident Marxists like Karl Korsch, to anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism, to radical Christianity and artistic rebellion. Ideas about the release of subjectivity, critiques of everyday life, analyses of the distortion of needs by commodity production, had all been expressed in an abstract manner and discussed in tiny groups and coteries. What was significant about the events of the French May in particular was that for the first time they were taken up by a popular movement. By 26 May ten million French workers were on strike, not for a bigger share of the cake, but for the bakery. The stupor of 'métro-boulot-dodo' (tube-work-sleep) seemed over.

Clearly all these people hadn't sat and read a few situationist texts, thumbed through their Lukács and Lefebvre and decided, heigh-ho, our historic destiny as the proletariat is to raise ourselves to a consciousness of our own alienation. The question of what actually inspired workers to strike, occupy and form councils is a signpost to the nature of the discontent which shaped the May uprising. It also gives an indication of forms of oppression and dissatisfaction which were to recur in the aftermath of '68.

At the time the French workers' motivations were fiercely contested. The Communist-led union, the CGT, insisted their demands were economic. They simply wanted more money. The Socialist CFDT was more inclined to recognise demands to change the quality of life. Certainly those demands were widespread. In June 1968 the Citroën workers, many of them immigrants, were still on strike. They produced a leaflet for their area:

'The workers are —
ON STRIKE: for the respect of the human person and for more dignity.
ON STRIKE: for the immediate enforcement of trade-union and individual freedom in the factory.
ON STRIKE: against excessive speed-up of work which ruins their health.
ON STRIKE: for greater hygiene and respect in the company hostels.
ON STRIKE: for better conditions of life and work.'

These factory occupations created strike committees; at Orly-Nord an interesting call for women workers to form their own plant committee was made. Some of the strikers' wives also went around the countryside to spread the word and encourage support, just as women in 1984-85 opposed the pit closures. At Batignolles two women from the council estate borrowed a van and a loudspeaker and called a meeting, then took over the local 'social centre' as a headquarters. Farmers from a nearby village brought in food which was sold at cost price or given away. The committees also organised film shows, discussions, meetings, play groups and free meals for children. In Nantes, workers occupied the local social security and child benefit offices, replacing the government nominees on the administrative board by elected union delegates. They said that social security payments were workers' money and they wanted this money to be managed directly by the workers themselves.

It is often forgotten that in 1967 the workers at Rhodiaceta in Besancon occupied their factory, demanded more time for culture and leisure and created, in effect, an ongoing carnival to which they invited the local community, including students. As always, it is not clear who 'ignited' who.

The British filmmaker Marc Karlin has told of how he happened to be in Paris in '68, making a film about an American deserter. On the 9 May 'everything went haywire'. The laboratory workers announced they would only process films about workers and he was sent off to film in a distant railway depot. There the railway workers explained they were opposed to the abolition of guards on the trains. Instead of being with their old companions they had to press a wheel every few seconds to show they were awake. If not, the alarm system went off. The students came to the depot and told them they should form a soviet. The workers for their part were dazzled by the arrival of so many young women in mini-skirts. One man was a great fan of Simone Signoret and became obsessed with the project of the filmmaker bringing her to the depot. This was indeed a time when people believed in their dreams . . .

NOTHING THAT was fought against in '68 has disappeared. The intensification of labour and its devastation of body, mind and spirit, the inhuman application of technology, the unsocial organisation of working time, lack of local power in the decisions which affect the economic livelihood of whole communities, lack of access to the social resources controlled by the state — they are all still with us. But in France, in 1968, they were met by a confident working class and by young people who did not fear unemployment.

Since 1968, socialists are no nearer to agreeing on what kind of society we aim to create or how to go about achieving it. There were then and are now fundamental disagreements about work and leisure. Some '60s leftists said that

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Paul Johnson *NS* 24 May 1968

A spectre is haunting Europe — the spectre of student power. As in 1848, each outbreak in each European capital contains the seeds of another elsewhere, as students gain courage from the success and audacity of their foreign brethren, and learn from their mistakes. With each outbreak, the students raise their objectives and widen their horizons. There is no need to speak of a Students' International, for this implies a common organisation, a discipline and a programme which simply do not exist. Pavlovian mutterings, by Lords Butler and Alport, about international communist plotters pulling the strings, simply betray the gentlemen's age and ignorance: they are fighting a bogey laid to rest a decade or more ago, and which is now just as frightened of the new apparition as they are themselves — perhaps more so, to judge by the frenzied efforts of the Communist Party to exorcise it. Of course there are many and multiplying contracts between students in different countries: exchange of information and techniques, gestures of solidarity, sometimes even active assistance. But the student revolt is both less and more than an international conspiracy: it is spontaneous and systematic at the same time. Spontaneous, because these young men and women do not need to be persuaded, organised or regimented by anyone into doing what they are doing; systematic, because they are inspired by common attitudes, grievances, disgusts and doctrines, which leap across the frontiers . . . This is such a rare event in history that we are fortunate to be alive to witness it. For too long, those of us who care about politics have been imprisoned in the sterile triangle formed by communism, fascism and bourgeois democracy . . . No wonder young people look for a fourth choice: and in Paris, it seems to me, they are beginning to find one . . . Once again, the French have given birth to a new revolutionary spirit, which will ultimately enrich the lives of all of us. I would like to think, without much hope, that Britain had a contribution to make.

work should be made more creative and less alienating, others that work was inherently disagreeable and that hours should be reduced so there was more free time. The French situationists were gloomy about leisure — it, too, was alienated. Similar disputes circulate two decades later between red and green socialists, however much the economic context has changed. It is also possible to detect in '68 those ambivalences about power which have persisted in feminism. Leftism in '68 was unsure whether the aim was to take power or abolish it.

The situationists believed in a revolutionary transformation but they stressed the assertion of conscious desire. The Leninist *groupuscules* still argued in terms of an impending crisis and capitalism's collapse. There were, however, groups like the CFDT in France and those who organised the British May Day Manifesto who were seeking to move from specific reforms to the transformation of society, without waiting for a doubtful revolutionary break from capitalism.

The May Day Manifesto was first issued in 1967 and extended the following year. It, too, attacked increasing shift work, health hazards and the denial of workers' social life:

'It is not only conditions of work, in a general sense. One of the most bitter areas of poverty and inequality in a modern society is our experience of what work means, as a giving and taking of human energy. It is characteristic that in modern capitalism, and in a diluted Labourism, the problem of meaning in work is hardly even discussed.'

Diluted Labourism was not listening at the time. By going along with the claims of modernisation the Labour party also abandoned a vital argument. The May Day Manifesto maintained:

'Modernisation fatally short-circuits the formation of social goals. Any discussion of long-term purposes is made to seem utopian, in the down-to-earth, pragmatic climate which modernisation generates.'

Workers' control was a key issue in '68. The situationists had been iconoclastic in their contempt for planning — though they did look at the power relations behind the organisation of urban space. The CFDT had begun to touch on planning within the firm — worker participation in raising finance and in investment decisions.

Creating the power to influence the investment of enterprises and the nature of the goods they produce was of course an important element in recent local authorities' economic strategies, influenced by the Lucas workers' alternative plan of the mid-1970s. Despite the differing context the same controversy surrounded them. Is workers' control the outcome of a revolutionary situation, or is it an extension of the democracy which is a necessary element in the transition to socialism? Lack of agreement about whether to adopt a straightforward strategy of opposition or attempt to demonstrate how an alternative could be possible has combined with an absence of specific proposals to extend workers' control as a means to democratise society as a whole.

From the American student movement's community organising came another application of direct democracy. In the early '60s, radical students sought to make conscious the 'invisible rebellion' and 'economic voicelessness' of the urban poor. Casey Haydon extended the concept of direct democracy, arguing: '. . . those who are affected by decisions must *make* the decisions, whether the institution in question be the welfare department, the university, the factory, the farm, the neighbourhood or the country.'

Strongly influenced by the black Civil Rights movement, American community organising in the '60s overcame the focus on production which excluded non-waged people. This was to have repercussions in many countries during the following decade, repercussions which are still evident in the '80s. Instead of being seen as victims of discrimination, many groups of people, including lesbians, gays, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, asserted their rights.

But the new problems raised were myriad. Who speaks for oppressed groups? What is the community? Having rejected the idea of a vanguard party, many community organisers found themselves a *de facto* vanguard when everyone else became exhausted with 'contestation' and participation and stayed at home. Nor did the relationship of 'organiser' and 'community' prove easy. The spread of direct democracy did not solve the problem of the co-ordination of decision-making possible in more complex democratic systems in which there can be delegation of responsibility. It was this problem which re-emerged in the '80s in Britain, when left local authorities tried to strengthen and deepen representative democratic forms by the direct participation of the community and rank-and-file workers in developing creative economic and social alternatives. The initiative and ingenuity released indicate the significance of pursuing this interaction — which is presumably why the government is so intent on its destruction.

SO 1968 got the 'critique of everyday life on to the agenda. But it left no maps for its practical transformation. A fundamental disagreement has been about the extent to which organisation should anticipate the future.

The German student movement was especially earnest about creating prefigurative models in the process of struggle, for the shadow of fascism was ever present. Women in Germany pointed out that talk was empty without practical measures and argued, particularly, for child care. In the summer of 1968, at a conference in Frankfurt, Helke Sander put it like this:

'The separation between private and public life always forces the woman into lonely endurance of the problems of her role . . . women can only find their identity if the problems previously hidden in the private sphere are articulated and made into the focus for women's political solidarity and struggle.'

She went on to ask why the men could not admit their exhaustion and strain after a year of confrontation.

'Why do you all buy Wilhelm Reich? Why do you discuss the class struggle here and discuss at home what's lacking in your sex life?'

Twenty years on it seems somewhat optimistic to assume that politics could sort out sexual 'lacks'. But contradictory junctures between private and public have slowly given rise to a sustained and practical critique of everyday life. The belief that contestation had to be in every aspect of life, in the family, as consumers, even in language, has also provoked from women far-reaching questions about our needs and power. (Though to be honest it has sometimes resulted merely in terminal exhaustion.)

Identification with marginal groups defined by our rulers as 'other', outlaws, the mad, was a feature of 1968 which feminists took on board. For Simone de Beauvoir 'otherness' was how men define women and thus a mark of inferiority. However Luce Irigaray was later to argue that the coming to life of the feminine had the potential to open new possibilities of thought and culture.

The tension inherent in trying to value difference without enclosing ourselves within it was not new but it found new terms of reference. Also, as Claire Duchen notes in her account of *Feminism in France*, 'awareness of the political nature of private life' awakened a wider interest in the links between pyschoanalysis and society. These links appear much more complex than they did when we were busy buying our Reich 20 years ago.

A real and unresolved difficulty in the '60s was the popularity of Marcuse's argument that capitalism was a 'psychological economy' which produced and administered 'the needs demanded by the system — even the instinctive needs.' What basis then was there for the creation of prefigurative models? Why invoke desire if nothing escaped capital?

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While one strand appeared to argue we were constructs of capitalism another asserted the uncovering of alternative needs. In *Personal Politics* Sara Evans describes Kathie Amatniek's call for 'consciousness raising' in the US. 'In our groups, let's share our feelings and pool them. Let's let ourselves go and see where our feelings lead us.' Leaving nothing to chance she added 'Our feelings will lead us to ideas and then to actions.'

IT WAS TO prove true — but only up to a point. Consciousness-raising groups could make personal needs social and evident; they could also stifle dissent. The polarisation between experience and theory did not help feminists consider how we theorise on the basis of experience. After all, existing theory is not devoid of experience. Still American women were asking a vital question in 1968. How *is* consciousness changed?

1968 called into question many assumptions which had come to prevail in Marxist thought in the period of Stalinist 'glaciation'. But in retrospect I think we were overconfident in believing we could see everything so clearly. We were dazzled by the acceleration of events. Rushing from anti-Vietnam demonstrations to tenants' meetings, doing street theatre in Trafalgar Square and occupying colleges, we gave little thought to the obstacles that faced us.

We ignored the meantime, between the now and the desired socialist future.

Ten years ago I thought the problem with the post-'68 Leninist revival — the spread of Trotskyist groups — was that it meant we did not break with past organisational habits. Now I would put it more simply; it contributed to an evasion of the big question for left-wing socialists: What should we do in the here and now?

1968 left a disputed legacy: freedom of the will vs total conditioning; rejection of leaders along with the emergence of unrepresentative media stars; questioning of a vanguard party only to create a myriad vanguard sects. I would not like to relive it. Time moves on after all. But I won't forget it either.

It is not simply what you can understand after 20 years, it is what defies understanding and yet is evident — that turnabout of consciousness, that glimpse round the corner of the real. 'It was as if everybody was seized by lightning', Marc Karlin recalled.

It was not sufficient, but it was something. □

Do anything beautiful!

In this issue: Don't let your chick blow your balls. Is Tiny Tim what he eats? How telly screws up pop. Indian ashrams. Greek gaols. Bernadette Devlin freaks out. Smash cash. No, not *this* issue, sorry, but *Oz*, 1968. *And* you got lyrics from the Incredible String Band and half-page ads for a product that really could increase the size of the male organ. All for only three shillings! Nigel Fountain looks back in wonder at the underground press.

'WE GET a lot of letters from England,' said *Screw*'s editor. 'They seem to mention marrows a lot.'

'Yes,' said *Screw*'s founder and owner Al Goldstein. 'Just what is a *marrow*?'

'It is a large courgette,' I replied, stumbling through my American horticultural vocabulary. 'A zucchini.'

'*Ah*,' said Goldstein. 'I see.'

A BBC producer and I were in New York interviewing the alumni of 1968 and Al is one fat man — he is in an upmarket weightwatchers' group — who did well out of the wars of those times. In 1968 he noticed that many of the people who bought the then flourishing American underground press — the *Berkeley Barb*, the *East Village Other*, the *Los Angeles Free Press, et al* were not doing so for their imaginative accounts of the occupation of Columbia University, the exploits of the Yippies, or the battles at the Chicago Democratic Party convention. They were the real army of the night, the dirty raincoat detachment, in search of the sexual contact ads. Goldstein acutely perceived as he launched *Screw* that autumn that 'I am that man in the dirty raincoat.'

Thus did his offspring prosper. Goldstein's formula then, and now, was to blend pornography of a notably non-idealised kind with a form of social comment. It tends to echo, in its obsessive attention to minutiae, some of the products of the farther shores of American ultra-leftism. But it has been a mix that has got him repeatedly up against the law and spurred the American Civil Liberties Union to assert he gave their cause a bad name.

Yet it has paid off at the cash-till: *Screw* sells to 98,000 New Yorkers weekly, and only bothers to accept ads on two days a week. How many other papers can afford such a luxury? As an offshoot Goldstein hosts a late-night porn show on cable TV.

Amidst the storms of '68, Goldstein's trick was to identify one of the crucial undercurrents, sex. Attention to the other two hedonistic ripples paid off as well. The drugs obsession produced the briefly successful *High Times;* rock'n'roll generated Jann Wenner's *Rolling Stone*, still coining it 21 years after its launch. Both *Screw* and *Rolling Stone* helped drain the sea on which America's 1960s radical press sailed. One took the sex ads and thus the sex-oriented sales, while the other sucked in the music ads and the non-activist segment of the underground press market. Wenner, says Abbie Hoffman, was the '60s Benedict Arnold. But unlike Arnold, who sided with George III in the American War of Independence, Wenner has prospered mightily.

It is a cautionary tale. For while the US still boasts a healthier alternative — and straight — press than Britain, the underground press that once claimed a readership in millions is gone. And here too the papers that have survived are those that identified cores and consumers within the radical movement. Thus can *Spare Rib*, born out of, and in reaction to the underground, still rely on its feminist readership. And *Time Out*, born to inform young Londoners of the whereabouts of Jethro Tull, the Doors and Jean-Luc Godard, can still cater for that market now transformed by video retro, CDs and style. Gone are *Gandalf's Garden* (theoretical organ of the Hobbits), *Grass Eye, It, Ink, Styng* from Barnsley, the real *Seven Days* and *Oz* and *Black Dwarf*.

For the last two 1968 was their year. Conceived in 1967, *Black Dwarf* first published in the aftermath of the May Events. That year 'We shall fight, We Shall Win, London, Paris, Rome, Berlin' proved a more exciting and realisable itinerary than the previous year's calls to San Francisco. It arrived as the wave peaked. With the eclectic liberal expertise of editor Richard Neville, *Oz* meanwhile dumped the bells and beads to start 1968 with an *AgitOz* issue that provided background briefings on the stars and events essential for the times: Mao, Trotsky and What Went Wrong In Russia. Alongside a revolutionary current, long dead reds briefly became pop media stars.

Someone should — well they probably have — do a thesis on reverse cultural colonisers. As the founding fathers of British Trotskyism were drawn from Palestine, South Africa, Ireland and the West Indies, so many of the London underground press's founding fathers and mothers were from Australia, the US, Italy, Holland, France — and Pakistan. Australia produced much of *Oz's* backbone — Neville, Germaine Greer, Martin Sharp — Jim Haynes was an American co-founder of *It* while writers like Angelo Quattrocchi, Simon Vinkenoog and Jean-Jacques Lebel popped in and out of the underground press. By the

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late '60s the children of the upper classes, never ones to miss a party or Party, had joined in, but in those earlier days the British contingent of the underground relied heavily on internal colonials, Jimmy Porter's kid brothers, the radical grammar school boys. Later, of course, the nascent British women's movement took inspiration and founders from the radical Americans of the Stoppit Committee, the London-based campaign against the Vietnam War.

In 1968 they were all on the same bus, even if some promptly got off. If revolution was in fashion, then the fashionable would mouth the word, whatever it meant. Soon afterwards Gene Mahon of the short-lived English *Rolling Stone* admonished Germaine Greer. The Australian, after police raids on the underground press, had denounced *Rolling Stone's* unwillingness to be identified as underground. 'Revolution,' said Mahon, 'is a happening thing'. As of course were police raids.

Yet the confusion was understandable. Passengers joined the bus at different stops, for different trips and with different, or no, destinations in mind. Britain's first underground paper *International Times* — quickly abbreviated to *It* after intervention by Printing House Square's lawyers — had been born in the autumn of 1966 out of a desire to link primarily cultural movements. There was politics, but the tone was far from the *New Left Review* or the *New Statesman.* Indeed the latter promptly damned the paper as another nasty American import in Hoggartian tones shared by much of the grumpy British left.

It's political culture came out of the mild but exciting — or mildly exciting — milieu of the early Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the nihilism of the American Beats and unformed discontent with the Way We Were. One of its earliest, and still most wildly utopian, campaigns was to turn London into a '24-hour city', not so much a bang as an all-night Wimpy. Its conception had come in 1965 with the Albert Hall poetry festival. There Allen Ginsberg had declaimed — badly, apparently — to 5,000 people and Adrian Mitchell's 'Tell Me Lies About Vietnam'

It, May 31-June 13 1968. *Nigel Fountain Collection*

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displayed an anger that helped spark the British movement against the war. But those days were far from 1968, even if they did, as *It*'s co-founder Miles has pointed out, show that there was a new, young, radical audience. It was less a counter-culture than a sub-culture and around *It*, says another veteran of the early paper, it was no time to be a student; a poet maybe, but students were for later.

The modesty of *It*'s early ambitions was more than matched by the early English *Oz*, which debuted in January 1967. *Oz* tinkered with London's media world, uncertainly criticising and copying *Private Eye*, and floundered. Yet by that summer the 'Dialectics of Liberation' event at the Roundhouse complete with Laing, Carmichael, Marcuse *et al*, the afterglow of the Summer of Love, dope and Wilsonian discontent, fused the papers — together perhaps with the then exciting *Peace News* — as alternative communication.

And they weren't just an alternative to the mainstream. That was busy, like the *News of the World*, with denunciations of Donovan and the 'Strange World of the Flower Children'. The virtue of the underground press as it developed was that it reflected some of the verve of the new American radicals, together, it should be said, with a numbing adherence to the worst of their purple prose.

There was another key element. Dissent plus offset litho printing equalled the underground press. Two decades before the Wapping picket lines, direct access meant the young making it up as they went along on IBM golfball typewriters and paste-up boards in Notting Hill and Covent Garden. Open access meant the good, bad and awful.

In 1968 new passengers joined the bus. The founders of *Black Dwarf* — the likes of Tariq Ali, Sheila Rowbotham and Clive Goodwin — might have sporadic qualms about their connections with the underground but those connections existed, within their circle, and in the eyes of the purchasers. The *Dwarf* joined *It* and *Oz* as alternatives to the *NME* for the lost souls of Ladbroke Grove, Leicester and points north and south. The relative austerity of the *Dwarf*'s design might have rested uneasily alongside the brilliance of the Martin Sharp illustrated *Oz* and the eccentricity of *It*'s paste-up, but in its audience and energy it was closer to them than the straight-laced left.

Other passengers began to get off. Particularly the Americans who had provided much of *It*'s early input. Their world had been that of cultural dissent under McCarthyism and there was little room within it for the students of the Sorbonne or even Chicago. The new America was reflected in *It*'s pages, together with echoes of Situationism. The latter was to prove an ideal movement for the disconnected freak looking for a political plug and repelled by the far left's lack of imagination. *It* meanwhile produced a Paris special, *Oz* even distributed an edition in that city.

So what went wrong? At first nothing. Indeed amidst the ideological fall-out of 1968 the British underground press appeared to flourish. Across Britain new papers were born, to the irritation of local dignitaries and police from Brighton to Aberdeen, from Bristol to Barnsley. In London in 1969 out of *Rolling Stone* came *Friends*. In 1970 came, briefly, *Idiot International*. In 1971 came *Oz*'s attempt at a London *Village Voice*, the ill-starred *Ink*.

Ink was the turning point. After a disastrous launch it had, by the autumn of 1971, briefly captured something of the anger of the post-1968 left and the excitement of the early underground. But it was too late. The record industry ads — lifeblood of many of the papers — were fading, and the cultural revolutionaries of the '60s were living in a decade where the heat was on the industrial struggle, with the early '70s strike wave. By that time the boys and girls on the bus had *some* idea of where to go, but the directions were clearly different, and the bus had broken down. They decamped to bedsits, straight and revolutionary journalism and politics, poetry, movies, books, often to have their subsequent works neatly pigeon-holed years later within the pages of *Time Out*.

In a reactionary decade magazines of a sub-, rather than a counter-culture flourish. The fusions of 1968 are long gone. The ensuing years saw plenty of attempts at a radical independent press, but the casualty list — and some of the papers — make grim reading. Despite all the brave talk of co-operative papers only *City Limits* — born of a 1981 strike on *Time Out* — still flourishes. Yet the ideas of those papers — and crucially perhaps the example of self-activity — have become common currency, or wait in the wings. They could be daft and dreadful, but hot potatoes beat marrows, any day. □

Nigel Fountain is the author of *Underground: The London Alternative Press 1966-74* to be published next spring by Comedia Routledge. His programme on the British and American radical and underground movement, one of a series on 1968, is to be broadcast on Radio 4 on 20 January 1988.

Outside readings

'There had to be a third set of texts, another reading which neither blotted out the outside world in impacted rage nor appropriated highbrow culture as weapon in an undeclared and doomed guerrilla war.' Fred Pfeil gives a US working-class view of '60s counter-culture.

THREE KINDS of texts and/or ways of reading ran without resolution through virtually all my '60s experience. One kind came out of the small factory town I am from, born into a working-class family on my mother's side, petit-bourgeois on my father's. For my present purposes, though, these class specificities are less important than the overall white working-class character of the entire town, defining both itself and the world as a place where you worked hard for little, took it gratefully and kept your mouth shut; where you voted Republican because they were right, and expected nothing for it, where in fact you expected nothing for anything, especially nothing in the end.

That was the way the clenched world read in that poor drab region of silent Swedes, and still reads, for as far as most of the people there are concerned nothing has changed. Nor does this view or reading have anything to do with the papers or TV, except insofar as certain news stories bear out its hopeless truths, e.g. the crucifixion of hard-working, graceless Nixon at the hands of the Democrats and smart boys of the Press, or the loss of the Vietnam War. It is a viewpoint which in fact does not require reading at all in the narrow sense of the word, and since it does not know how to respond to any music either it is silent, no jukeboxes in bars, no hit stations on in cars on the way in to work at the plant.

Yet it does produce its own texts now and then nonetheless, stories and jokes which can only be read in its own way of reading, and this joke, which I heard the last summer I worked down at the plant, is one of its kind! It seems there are these two guys, Pete and Charlie, and they've both been working at the plant 15, 20 years, eating lunch every day in the lunchroom, and one day they knock off and sit down in the lunchroom and Pete opens up his bucket and lets out a yell. 'Peanut butter!' he says, 'Goddamn peanut butter every goddamn day. I can't stand it any more!' and he throws the sandwich up against the wall.

So his best friend Charlie, when Pete stops kicking the shit out of the sandwich, steps in. 'Hey calm down old buddy,' says Charlie, 'no reason to fly off the handle like that. If you don't want peanut butter no more, tell your wife to fix you something else.'

'You keep my wife out of this goddammit!' says Pete. 'I make my own goddamn lunch!'

The second kind of reading I learned in the '60s sprang from this same fear and fury in a new context. Amherst College. Class of 1971. The night before my freshman year began, while my mother and sister lay sleeping in our Howard Johnson's motel room I sat up in the john to finish my book of Sophocles plays. A few months later and I was up all night standing on a chair to get

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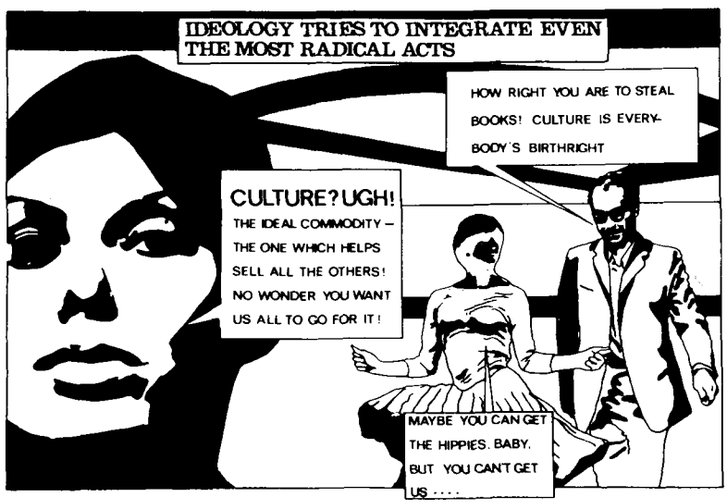
Dr Faustus under my belt. Stand on a chair to read and if you fall asleep you get hurt. Go to sleep instead and leave that much more chance of getting cut down tomorrow, recognised as the dumbo cultural ape from a hick town that you really are. 'Only for the sake of the hopeless,' wrote Benjamin, 'are we given hope,' and though of course he was not hot or classical enough at the time to make my list of assigned readings, my motivation was much the same. I had four years to catch up and beat every one of those rich bastards my classmates, lift and wrestle down every scrap of goddamn culture they'd always had. Otherwise, I had no right to be there at all.

No one paid more explicit allegiance than I to Western Civ in the years 67 to 71; no one had more contempt for student activists and their politics alike. When Amherst's student radicals dragged their weary asses down to the dining hall after a long night of running mimeos, there to continue their tumultuous discussion of the Cultural Revolution or the next week's anti-war march, I was the one who scraped their Marlboro butts, their uneaten eggs and toast into my buscart; while they went off to study the aftermath of May '68 in Paris the following summer, I would be back busting my ass in the plant, packing in their Nietzsche and Shakespeare and Joyce whenever I could between punching out and falling asleep. That was why when they shut down the campus in spring 1970, I hunted up my English prof and demanded he and I discuss the last book on the syllabus — *Swann's Way* by Marcel Proust; why in that whole four years at the '60s dazzled heights I did exactly one piece of active political work, canvassing working-class neighborhoods in nearby Northampton on the war only so that none of my rich bastard classmates would do it instead. I was that sure their idea of canvassing meant telling people what to think. So while on the surface what this reading looked like, and was, was the most reactionary grade-grinding shit-eating obeisance conceivable, it was also a private perverse class war wholly sanctioned by the folks back home, who not only seemed to understand but practically expected it of me, up to and including my increasing detachment from them, the very signal of our triumph and success.

On the other hand, no matter how 'organically' this second kind of reading developed from the first, it still led to a class double-bind whereby to succeed was to fail, to behave according to the town inside me was to find myself alone. There had to be a third set of texts, another reading which neither blotted out the outside world in impacted rage nor appropriated highbrow culture as weapon in an undeclared and doomed guerrilla war.


IDEOLOGY TRIES TO INTEGRATE EVEN THE MOST RADICAL ACTS
HOW RIGHT YOU ARE TO STEAL BOOKS! CULTURE IS EVERY-BODY'S BIRTHRIGHT
CULTURE? UGH!
THE IDEAL COMMODITY — THE ONE WHICH HELPS SELL ALL THE OTHERS! NO WONDER YOU WANT US ALL TO GO FOR IT!
MAYBE YOU CAN GET THE HIPPIES. BABY. BUT YOU CAN'T GET US ....
situationist comic strip

Already, even before leaving home, I had taken the unprecedented step of buying two records, *Surrealistic Pillow* by the Airplane and the Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper*, to my knowledge the only extant copies in my town, which I played and studied again and again. Likewise, at Amherst I bought a hardbound anthology of articles culled from various underground papers, *Notes from the New Underground*, ed. Jessie Kornbluth, and read it behind closed doors in my spare time, replaying certain pieces as if they were cuts on any one of the Doors or Hendrix or Cream albums I took in with the same hagiographic devotion; and when I read Allen Ginsberg's 'everybody who hears my voice, directly or indirectly, [should] try the chemical LSD at least once, every man woman and child American in good health over the age of 14' (Kornbluth, p.54) I took some right away, it was that simple and important a means of escape.

So in all its antinomian delirium, its white consumerist surrealism on the cheap, that counter-culture became my official scripture, its precepts and prophecies serving to cover my redneck American Legion anger without ever quite replacing it. That way, thanks to all my gospel reading from Zap Comix to Grateful Dead, everything from Chicago '68 to Attica '71 was about the same revolt of young against old, hip vs square, stoned vs straight, madness vs reason, life vs death, etc.: so when the going got rough all you had to do was hang tight, stay cool until the old farts died off and we took over, after which everything would be all right.

Thus defined as the space of time during which all three of these readings vied with and fed off each other, my '60s started late and ended early, running roughly from September '67 and my night with Sophocles to an afternoon seven years later in Berkeley, 1974, when a woman I was dating took me to the alumni pool for a swim and I looked at all those golden skins, spendy trunks and halters fresh out of the water, stretched out on their towels reading *The Gulag Archipelago*. There must have been a hundred people there my age, our age, around that pool, all of whom must have gone through college in those same late '60s, out there on the cutting edge: and a good 25 of them were reading Solzhenitsyn, the book's silver cover kept flashing in my eyes; and at last I knew Charles Reich was wrong, the New Age was not on the way.

More and other epiphanies would soon follow — not least from a trip on a US Navy destroyer to Southeast Asia at the real end of the war, a voyage which pushed me into an explicitly radical politics at last. Yet even today I have to admit that radicalism exists as a kind of alternating current generated in the arc between an ongoing affiliation with the 'hip-wazee' and all its goofball fears and dreams on the one hand, on the other that same relentless suffering anger of all those still left unrepresented, both back home and around the world, and all those whose only freedom lies still all too often in their own refusal to read. Such a circuit, whose positive and negative poles are constantly reversed, is my chief inheritance from the '60s reading of me.

Reprinted from *The '60s Without Apology*, published by Social Text/University of Minnesota.

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Cohn-Bendit: the Greening of the Red

Daniel Cohn-Bendit — 1968's improvisatory genius, inspired street orator, provocateur and anarchist — is today past 40, and an advocate of parliamentary democracy. David Caute reports.

We were more than self-confident. We thought we could do more than we could. We thought everything was possible. We had a utopian view of the world — self-government, workers' control — but all this was important to our ability to criticise society Daniel Cohn-Bendit.

FRANKFURT, NOVEMBER 1987: Dany Cohn-Bendit bounces into the imposing dining room of the Hessischer Hof Hotel with the urchin smile familiar to the generation of '68 and an uncomfortable dressing covering his nose. The black-coated waiters don't flinch: celebrity now surpasses respectability in the *Zeitgeist*. Cohn-Bendit has been playing football, not rioting — though the city is riotous enough, with militarised ranks of uniformly masked ecologists firing standardised steel catapults at young policemen, who in turn are capable of earnestly explaining their indignation by demonstration and televised interview.

Clearly the political culture of Frankfurt has changed during the two decades since Karl Dietrich Wolff deployed his SDS guerrilla units against city, university and state — the decades of Rudi Dutschke's 'long march through the institutions' of democratic capitalism. But the capitalist system has survived the challenge. Checking into the hotel — I wasn't paying — I was greeted by a bowl of free fruit in my room, an exorbitant mini-bar, and a range of miniature toiletries beckoning to be stolen. *Klau' Mich* — 'Steal Me': that had been the title of the 'Leftporn' book marketed in 1968 by Berlin's half-Yippie, half-situationist, always scandalous Kommune 1, in an effort to raise legal fees for the many state trials its leading spirits flamboyantly enjoyed.

Cohn-Bendit was never a citizen of that Bohemia, but his active sympathy extended to any young radical engaged in confrontation with the state. Today his position is rather more discriminating. He's past 40.

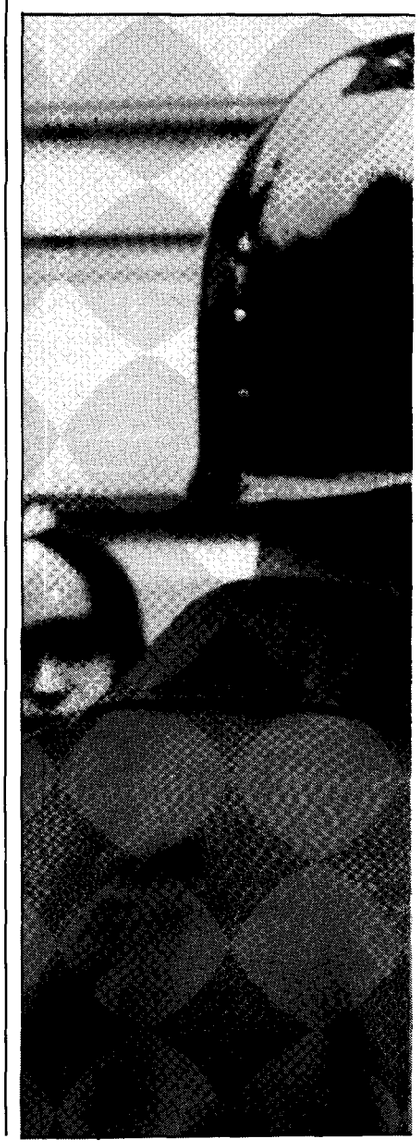
Nineteen years ago he returned to Frankfurt, the banished prince of the Paris insurrection. On 22 September 1968 he demonstrated against the presentation of a Book Fair prize to the esteemed poet of *négritude*, Leopold Senghor, who also happened, as President of Senegal, to be responsible for calling in French troops to put down his own revolting students. For the young agitator who had bellowed *'Occupons la Sorbonné'* on the Champs de Mars, that was intolerable. Cohn-Bendit got off with a suspended sentence, but five weeks later he interrupted the trial of four radicals accused of arson (three of whom later became members of the Baader-Meinhof Red Army Faction) and this time he went to prison.

Today Cohn-Bendit is an advocate of parliamentary democracy. Dany-the-Red has been greened. The Greens have tasted the bargaining power which proportional representation offers to small parties growing larger; after gaining 30 per cent of Frankfurt's votes they entered a short-lived coalition government in the local state Landtag of Hesse. They are now back on the streets, but the beguiling aroma of power lingers.

If Cohn-Bendit's anarchist political philosophy has gone, his temperament retains its anarchic edge; like Norman Mailer he remains a high-profile publicist rather than a politician at ease with the machine. He is busy, in a hurry, constantly beseiged for interviews and sometimes stubborn about fees — he taxes the rich and gives freely to the poor. Recently he completed a four-part television documentary series of his own, *Revolution Revisited*, and an accompanying book whose somewhat sardonic title can be roughly translated, *The Revolution, We all Loved Her!*. Trailed by a camera crew, he made good contact with the ageing American Yippie Abbie Hoffman — still kindred spirits — and rather uncomfortable contact with the other Yippie media star of the '60s, Jerry Rubin, now a spiritual engineer for Yuppie culture, separated from outright Reaganism only by a lingering sense of what is kosher. Jerry took Dany up to his New York penthouse, in between biogenic jogs, showed him rows of pill bottles, and talked about the urgent duty to make money. 'But you used to burn money in the '60s!' Cohn-Bendit protested. Rubin was not thrown: burning money was the cutting edge of human endeavour in the '60s and making it has been the cutting edge ever since. It's all in the head — somehow.

Cohn-Bendit, whose head retains the clarity of an inspired street orator (he talks at half-shout, megaphonic and compelling) was not convinced. Yet Dany himself is a convert, with his own historic reversal in the head: to be a Green today (he insists) is to place oneself at the same point of advanced political consciousness as Reds had in '68. 'We have all these movements, the ecological movement, the peace movement, the women's movement — this is a sign that society is taking over its responsibilities.' His friend Joshka Fischer, another son of '68 and until recently Hesse's Green Minister of the Environment, agrees: 'What we need is a new internationalism, an ecological and social internationalism, not in the old Marxist or old Labour movement way . . .'

International solidarity was the first rule of the generation of '68 and 'Ho-Ho-Ho Chi Minh' their universal war cry, their verbal Tet Offensive. At SDS's international Vietnam Congress, held in West Berlin in February 1968, Rudi Dutschke, despite his loathing of Stalinism, led the chanting, an



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inspirational figure for the young French radicals who would soon bring Gaullist France to the point of paralysis. Dutschke was shot, almost fatally, on 11 April 1968 — a week after the assassination of Martin Luther King — while riding his bicycle away from SDS headquarters in Berlin. The rioting that followed spread from Berlin to Bonn, Munich, London and Paris. The protest demonstrations in Paris brought the French ultra-left *groupuscules* their first real experience of unity: from Easter until the police invasion of the Sorbonne on 3 May was only three weeks and those weeks belonged to Daniel Cohn-Bendit, a founding member of the libertarian 22 March Movement at the Paris University campus of Nanterre.

A red-haired *'rouquin'*, Cohn-Bendit had been prominent in several escapades at Nanterre, including a protest occupation of the entrance hall of the segregated women's dormitory. In January 1968 the Gaullist Minster of Youth, François Missoffe, arrived to open a new swimming pool. Cohn-Bendit broke through the protective cordon of dignitaries and inquired why the Minister's massive manual on French youth made no mention of sexual problems. Missoffe replied that a dip in the new swimming pool was the best remedy; Cohn-Bendit likened this doctrine to that of the Hitler Youth, the Minister walked away, and a zealous official instigated proceedings to deport the 22-year-old student who, though born in France of German-Jewish refugee parents, had chosen German nationality mainly to avoid French military service.

The swimming pool incident reinforced Cohn-Bendit's reputation. As one Nanterre wall slogan put it, *'tout le monde est Cohn-Bendit.'* Despite friction about the cult of Dany's personality, which grew within the action committees and surfaced after he crossed the French frontier in defiance of a banning order and cheekily held a press conference in the Sorbonne, the *anciens combattants* still speak of him warmly. Jean-Marcel Bougereau was international secretary of the French National Union of Students in 1968:

He had a gift for speaking to the mass of students in a direct, provocative but comprehensible language, very important; he was spontaneous, natural, not sectarian, he was happy, he was laughing, he could crystallise a movement, not like the boring radical . . . He was not raising different issues, he was raising the same issues differently . . .

Less enthusiastic, yet grudgingly respectful about the tribune of the baby-boom generation (the French use the English expression), is Monsieur Pierre Grappin, whose increasingly unhappy duty was to administer the Nanterre campus throughout that riotous spring. A former Resistance hero known for his progressive views and liberal policies, Dean Grappin was unable to cope with this conflict of generations instigated by intellectual hooligans who distributed leaflets describing him as an 'SS Fascist'.

They had among them real provocateurs . . . I was angry — a deep disillusion . . . I was very upset to see young girls who had been very cooperative two weeks later sending me to the revolutionary tribunal. It really made me very sad . . . Their methods, apparently democratic, were deeply undemocratic . . . Cohn-Bendit? A very popular man for meetings. Much better than the others. He was a real demagogue — real — with a talent for people.

Compelled (as he believed) to close the campus in March, in April and again on 2 May, Grappin brought disciplinary charges against eight Nanterre students (Cohn-Bendit among them), precipitating a protest meeting in the Sorbonne, a panic call to the police, and the violation of a tradition of sanctuary seven centuries old when the police entered the main courtyard and arrested 300 militants (including, of

Cohn-Bendit, May 1968. *Sygma*

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course, Cohn-Bendit). About this Dean Grappin has no regret: 'I had a lot of people calling my home to raise my pity for these poor guys. At worst they risked six months suspension.'

The majority of the faculty at Nanterre were behind the Dean, but an exception was Cohn-Bendit's sociology professor, Alain Touraine. Their mutual respect developed into friendship; Touraine was one of four Nanterre professors who rallied to the defence of the eight *inculpés*. Yet Touraine's sociology course had come under attack from Cohn-Bendit and a small group of students who announced that they would not be examined in a subject imported from America and designed to reinforce capitalist-technocratic values. Cohn-Bendit explains: 'The students wanted to know: why are we learning this? To do what? To have what function in society? What sort of manager will I be in ten years time?'

In his book, *Le Mouvement de Mai*, Touraine observed that Cohn-Bendit constantly clashed with the 'Masons' of the sectarian *groupuscules* (Trotskyists, Communists, Maoists), ridiculing their fixed slogans and catchphrases, their conformist attitude towards the university itself. Cohn-Bendit confirms the point:

With Marxism you have to change all the structures to change life. We discovered and felt that the revolutionary process is a summary of changes in daily life. This was new. It was interesting for other students. We didn't propose a change in the next life, after you die for the revolution, but today where you live . . . We wanted to be in charge of our lives. That's still the main issue today.

Touraine believed at the time, and still believes, that the rebels were employing an antiquated lanuage — the myth of revolution — to express genuinely modern concerns and demands. Touraine's recent summation, 'Mai 1968 entre les souvenirs et l'Histoire' is echoed by Cohn-Bendit himself:

We were prisoners of mythology. Revolutionary theory was moribund but we didn't know it. That realisation took time. What we gained from May was the historical experience of collective action which is the basis of the social imagination. The 'individualism' of May was healthy, rooted in the group. Today we live off nostalgia for that spirit of conviviality and generosity.

The non-sectarian 22 March Movement offered an existentialist kind of politics — to think is to act, here and now — and it should not astonish us that at the height of the May insurrection it was Cohn-Bendit whom Jean-Paul Sartre chose — without bogus humility — to interview:

Your movement is interesting because it puts imagination in power . . . You have been able to create something which astonishes, something which jolts, something which repudiates all that has made our society what it is today. This is what I'd call the extension of one's potential . . . Don't give it up.

Loathed and feared by the Communists — *l'Humanité* described him as a petty-bourgeois 'German Jew' — Cohn-Bendit responded by baiting Louis Aragon when the doyen of Communist writers addressed a street meeting with an assurance that he too was young at heart. *'Vive Staline!'* heckled the *enragés*. Dany's improvisatory genius flourished in the turbulent streets of the Latin Quarter, amid the overturned cars, the felled plane trees, the torn-up paving stones. During the 'night of the barricades' (10-11 May) he was warned by Alan Touraine that the intended assult on the Sorbonne must result in bloodshed. Cohn-Bendit took the loudspeaker: 'We are not entering this whore of a Sorbonne while our comrades are still imprisoned'.

'The new radicals are "babies who were picked up" — they expect their demands to be met quickly. Others have suggested that activism is the consequence of excessive parental permissiveness . . . a failure to teach respect for authority.' *The Times*, 29 May 1968

WHAT followed May '68 for Cohn-Bendit was not terrorism on the Baader-Meinhoff model, but a renewed long march to the factories. As Joshka Fischer recalls, the colonisation of certain targeted enterprises (like the Opel works near Frankfurt) didn't work out: 'We had a full defeat. There was no chance. We were thinking in categories and concepts of yesterday not of tomorrow.' In short, the great working class, the hope of Marx, Engels, Kautsky and Rosa Luxemburg, remained stubbornly loyal to social democracy and the German economic miracle.

The working class has now faded from the horizon of the *anciens combattants* of 1968. Alain Krivine, the leading figure in the Trotskyist Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire, is one of the few who have not 'sold out'. Alain Geismar, the young general secretary of SNESup, the university teachers' union, who called his members out on strike in solidarity with the students, has also given up on the working class — even though he went through a Maoist phase after 1968 and suffered imprisonment.

One day the working class will open the cupboard, take the flag and liberate humanity. A lot of people were thinking that in the '50s and '60s . . . You had to be with the working class or you were nothing. I think this has changed.

Geismar, who had quickly adopted the libertarian ideal of *autogestion* or self-management in '68, and who disparaged Mitterrand, Mendes-France and the parliamentary Left, nevertheless worked in a technical advisory capacity for the Socialist Government of 1981-86 — under President Mitterrand. Cohn-Bendit even repudiates the anti-parliamentary rhetoric of 1968, his disparagement of Mendes-France as 'the left-wing de Gaulle'.

This was an error. We said election is bullshit. We should have had another attitude . . . If a new left government had been elected after a general strike, if the movement had proposed an election, they could have had a chance to win it.

Joshka Fischer, who now describes progress in terms of electioneering, power sharing and patronage, admits that the involvement of the broad masses in controlling their own destiny — the central proposition of the New Left in the '60s — has not been solved:

I think the dream of a political system ruled by the underdogs, ruled by the oppressed, it will be a dream . . . If you try to throw out or maybe kill the middle class then you will kill democracy, then you produce a new ruling class.

In essence the Greens have painted the great revisionist tradition, which extends back to Eduard Bernstein and Karl Kautsky, in a new colour. It is the freewheeling demonstrational culture of the Greens which is the heir to 1968, the 'modern' element. But Cohn-Bendit insists on a broader heritage:

For me politics is the fight for more autonomy and decision-making in the hands of society. On this I remain at the same point as in '68. But today we have to work within the state, parliament — this is a big change . . . I think people decide in certain circumstances they want to have a big influence on certain issues — ecology, nuclear power. At another time they want to delegate policy to a government. And this is what we didn't see. We thought people will always want to decide everything — this is not true.

I put it to Cohn-Bendit that progressive pressure-group politics is not so new as its advertising agents claim. If one traces the history of the American New Left through the 1960s, one finds a succession of single-issue campaigns, each related to a humane vision, each attracting young idealism: the civil rights campaign in the South, the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, the advocates of SANE and nuclear disarmament, the creation of black community groups in the ghettoes, the demonstrations against the Vietnam war, draft card burnings, the nascent women's movement. Yet by 1967-68 the tender, humanistic arteries of the Movement were hardening as the realities of power became clear. The 'system' would absorb protest, as Marcuse said, but not bend to it; the political machines and smoke-filled Democratic caucus rooms diverted and blunted protest — as with the Bobby Kennedy and Eugene McCarthy primary campaigns of '68. The upshot was the intransigent revolutionary spirit of 1967-69, whether libertarian, Black Power or Maoist. Those who demanded 'student power' meant *power*.

But the machines retained control. The capitalist profit motive extended its empire of persuasion. The dream of strangling the last capitalist with the guts of the last bureaucrat, daubed on the walls of the Sorbonne, looks as realistic today as another of 1968's sub-plots, the abolition of parents.

Alain Touraine argues that 20 years later a history of France could be written showing how all curves changed direction in '68 — justice, medicine, economics, politics, the women's movement, the arrival of ethnic minorities in politics, the first strikes of immigrant workers, the politicisation of private life. True enough. These were real gains, yet also consolation prizes for that remarkable generation of agitators and *révélateurs* whose clarity of vision, however 'utopian' or romantic, however misguided about Ho or Mao, remains the most precious 'moment' in our defeated lives. Talking to Dany, one feels both the power of the moment and the power of the defeat. □

David Caute's new book, *Sixty-Eight: the Year of the Barricades*, will be published by Hamish Hamilton on 11 January

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Dany Le Vert

Ed Vulliamy gives Daniel Cohn-Bendit the last word. He chooses to look to the future.

The flicker in the eyes of Daniel Cohn-Bendit is still mischievous, the mop of thick, curly hair that was one of the two reasons for his nickname 'Dany the Red' spells trouble too, somehow.

There is an almost exhausting 'joie de vivre' in Dany Cohn-Bendit's way of doing things. Sitting in the cafes of his old battleground of Paris — from which he was banned for 10 years — he seems to know every other person who happens to pass by; he gesticulates with animated confidence; he drinks a lot of coffee.

He breaks his earnest, sometimes severe, conversation with a giant honey-bear grin in order to declaim: 'Of course, I still have a utopian vision of the new society — what we have to do now is to find the right way to get it. 1968 exposed a fundamental rupture in the political system — and its lack of legitimacy. But it did not create a new society. We were still using the ideology of the 19th century. We have still to vindicate the politics of individual autonomy, and what we are now doing is to create a certain type of new politics more or less by trial and error — through experience'.

Cohn-Bendit is now prominent in *Die Grünen* (the Greens — they don't use the word 'party') in West Germany. He joined in 1984 — the first time in his life that he held a membership card. He edits a paper, *Pflasterstrand* (the Cobbled Beach) which has followed the fortunes of the Greens with commentaries which are generally supportive, often cutting and agile, within the debates that flare across the most eclectic political movement in Europe — and the most successful west European radical organisation to emerge since 1968.

'The Greens are the result of what we started in '68. We have kept moving. We were able to recognise mistakes, and one mistake was that we thought people wanted to be political for 24 hours a day. We talked about *imagination au pouvoir* (all power to the imagination). Now I would say we need ways to make that imagination bigger — we can only do so by showing we can achieve concrete reform, that gains can be made within the civil society'.

The idea of 'civil society' cuts to the core of the German Green movement, but it is a strange language to most of the British polity. 'By civil society, I mean the struggle towards the de-centralisation of power and the re-appropriation of power. The civil society is where people think and live for themselves outside the traditional political system. That is happening in Germany now, yes. The thing I got wrong in '68 was the degree to which we needed the interventions from within institutional politics. One of the purposes of the Greens is to create an umbrella inside the system with which to protect and to cover over the autonomy that is being created by the civil society.'

The Greens emerged in a country where the labour movement was intellectually and politically tired, its energy dissipated into an economic miracle — the *Modell Deutschland* — and a country which also had a living model of Stalinist stultification established among its own people to the east. Like the revolt of '68, the German radical movement refuses to accept the choice between communism and capitalism. The Greens came out of a melting pot of mass dissent which came alive in 'new social movements'. 'Citizens Initiatives' flourished across west Germany and a conference in Berlin in 1977 proclaimed a 'withdrawal from the German model'. The great wave of agitation which followed — which has drawn in 500,000 west Germans — has obvious parallels with '68.

In 1968, while the cobblestones were replaced and trees planted along the boulevards, Cohn-Bendit set out his own earthy manifesto which declaimed: 'To bring politics into everyday life is to get rid of the politicians'. But now he accepts the need to play the party game. 'The problem with the social movements is that they are not obliged to institutionalise and protect themselves. They have spread rapidly, sure, but we have learned, I think, that you can spread very fast and then get beaten back very fast. That is what happened to us in '68. What we are now concerned to do is to give a presence to what has been achieved, and that is very, very difficult now. I want to be able to say that we can try to achieve this with a political party, but a political party is by definition a bureaucratic organisation. The thing is that the Greens are pushed by the social movements which force them to bargain with their political power. With a party like the Greens we can begin to change the institutions of the country. I now accept that this is as important as anything else.' Provided that the party is 'pushed' in this way, says Cohn-Bendit, 'I believe that we can rehabilitate the idea of reform as not necessarily an abdication from utopia, but a real wish to move towards self-government'.

The German Greens are not homogeneous. They are riven by argument. Some supporters are direct descendants of '68. They are involved in the recent 'autonomist' rebellion in Hamburg or the series of confrontations at the nuclear plant in Wackersdorf. Others energetically distance themselves from this sort of carry-on, looking to maximise their parliamentary presence and, above all, to forge an alliance with the Social Democratic Party. The 'Fundies' believe that alliance betrays the new politics, the revolutionary 'eco-socialists' are divided on the issue, the 'realists' believe that the alliance is the only way to oppose the conservative majority (and would force the hand of the SPD). *Pflasterstrand* has generally favoured an alliance with the SPD, but condemns the more assertive 'realos' as 'intellectually lazy' and 'electoralist'.

'The question of alliances,' says Cohn-Bendit, 'is simply the question of being in the best possible position to oppose the government and to protect all those things we have been talking about. Look, I do not believe that we can open the debate on the main political issues until we have achieved that'.

There is one other major difference between '68 and the new German radicalism. 1968 detonated a rebellion among young workers, but the Greens remain to the left of the SPD, and have almost no contact with even a dissident workers' movement. For the 'fundis', like Rudolf Bahro (who has left the Greens), this separation is invevitable and desirable, since the workers' movement, he says, is part of industrial 'destructivism'. For people like Cohn-Bendit, the issue again invokes the matter of participation in 'the institutions'.

'The fundamental problem is that the Greens question the whole system of production. They question the goals and the idea of the productive society — think! In '68, we still thought growth was a good thing! Now, we have a programme which involves closing down a third of the jobs in the chemical industry. We are a challenge to the traditional goals of the workers' movement — and we were then. I do not have an answer to this, but I know that we very much need a dialogue now, between the ecology movement and the workers' movement. And this can only happen if there is a presence at the institutional level that can try to take the workers' movement outside the industrial system. It means showing that society can move by practical steps towards securing a standard of living that does not involve individual people going everywhere in cars'.

A year ago the streets of Paris were the stage for a revived spasm of rebellion. It must have brought back memories. '89-68-86' chanted the corteges as they wound through the Christmas-lit boulevards. Cars burned, 13-year-olds fired marbles from catapults, the sting of tear gas cut the evening air. Past and present students of the Sorbonne once again beat an entrenched French conservatism into a limited retreat — then, apparently, disappeared.

'Don't say it didn't succeed,' says Cohn-Bendit indignantly. 'It succeeded because it showed that the liberal idea that all people wanted was to succeed was wrong.'86 showed that the human — the social — thinking which came out of '68 is still alive in French society. It was a movement of feeling — exactly the kind of thing that exists in the civil society that I talked about. Succeeding does not count if it does not involve the Algerians, the blacks. What we are doing now is to bring that feeling into politics and to bring politics into that feeling.' □

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Front cover: Paris 1968, *Bruno Barbey — Magnum*. Back cover: Paris 1986, *DR*

1986

75p US$1.50 IR£1.10

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STATESIDE DIARY

Since I was one of those who bet against a Reagan-Gorbachev arms control deal — even the very limited one that has just been partly accomplished — I have been willing to take consolation where I can find it. And my comfort has been of the *nunc dimittis* variety. I can say that I have lived to hear Ronald Reagan called "a useful idiot for Kremlin propaganda" — and on prime time by one of the people who helped get him the nomination in 1980. There is a distinct relish to be had, as I write this, in seeing the right-wing freaks lampooning Reagan as Chamberlain, calling for his impeachment as a traitor and labelling him a Moscow stooge. This is precisely the language in which he was assailing the disarmament demonstrators five years ago. So, when he told an interviewer recently that the foes of the INF treaty have "accepted in their hearts that war is inevitable", he was capturing the same morbid and paranoid mentality that until recently held him prisoner too.

○

That mentality is by no means defunct, as was evidenced by the marvellously-timed shooting down of another shady friend of the *contra* over Nicaragua. Because the Senate-House hearings on the Iran-*contra* scandal were so obsessed with possible violations of American law, there is a very low understanding of the breaches in *international* law that the *contra* policy has necessitated. An example that ought to be more widely known is the abuse of the Red Cross symbol. In a massive *contra* attack this year, the brave lads were backed up by US helicopters carrying supplies and bearing Red Cross markings. The protests of the International Red Cross from Geneva were, as far I could determine, unreported in the American press and ignored by the Reagan administration. The over-used term "dirty war" could have been coined for this kind of tactic.

○

From what I read of Bryan Gould's efforts to re-package left reformism, he might do well to subscribe to *Tikkun*. This new Jewish bi-monthly review was started in order to combat the fish-eyed neo-conservative zealotry that had annexed *Commentary*. It takes its name from the Hebrew precept of "healing and repair". Its current issue sets an important question before the readership in the form of a competition. What should the "liberal and progressive forces" call themselves? Entries so far received include Neo-Compassionist, Evolutionary Democratic, Reconstructive Democratic, Social Humanist, Heartist (seriously) and Righteous Left. One real hard-liner proposed Social Democratic. The more I pondered these alternately yucky and wacky escape routes, the more I realised that the word "Socialist" possesses a punch and nobility that the word "Labour" does not. Hugh Gaitskell once contemplated changing the party's name. The revisionists will know no peace until they have confronted this "image" problem as well.

○

I lost count of the number of times this year that Paul Johnson objected in print to the use of the word "gay" by homosexuals. This boring and hoary complaint always takes the same form, with some heavy sarcasm about how gays aren't all that cheerful and some pretended concern about the loss to the language of a fine old English word. Well, the word "queer" is a very fine old English word, and a very necessary one, which for generations also carried the required *double-entendre*. But there was no objection from the fanatic lexicographical right to *this* usage. All that people like Johnson really mourn is the passing of a sneering pejorative.

○

The American left is convulsed over more than nomenclature these days. The question: what to make of Jesse Jackson? Can a man who only a few years ago was calling for a black alliance with the Republican Party be held to have evolved beyond hustling and opportunism? Are his critics really motivated by you-know-what? The Democratic Socialists of America, local section of the Socialist International, recently polled its members and found a majority for endorsing the Reverend. Imagine its surprise when he briskly repudiated the endorsement. In his rush to the centre and the right, he is reminding veterans of the zig-zaggery he displayed during the brave days of the Civil Rights Movement.

○

Over the course of the summer, some professor wrote to the *NS* (Letters, 24 July) ridiculing my hypothesis about Reagan and the "October Surprise" (*NS*, 3 July). This hypothesis draws upon the evidence that Reagan did an arms-for-hostages deal with Iran *before* the 1980 election. This would, if true, explain why arms shipments began so soon after his inauguration. It would also explain why the Ayatollah stopped being scared of a Reagan election victory. Former president Bani-Sadr of Iran believes that there was a deal, and there is more evidence for it than I can summarise here. The Senate majority leader recently called for an inquiry into the allegations, and a special counsel has been appointed to investigate by Representative John Conyers of the House Judiciary Committee. So we'll see.

What struck me in the said professor's letter, which did not deal with the evidence at all, was the repeated giggle about "conspiracy theory". We all know to be on our guard against this kind of reasoning. Everyone in my business gets letters in green ink about the truth behind the Kennedy assassination or the sinister power of the Freemasons. But who would have believed the CIA purchasing exploding cigars for Fidel Castro, let alone their hiring the Mafia to deliver same? When Ralph Nader began his exposé of General Motors he was almost unknown. A number of people impressed with his research stopped believing him when he claimed that he was being followed. But it was the exposure of the General Motors' invasion of his private life, as much as the hard evidence on their lethal automobiles, that brought Ralph his total vindication. My point: it is unwise to disbelieve in the collusion of certain forces, whether you call them "conspiracies" or not.

○

"Suez" was a collusion amounting to a conspiracy. In a farewell lunch that he gave last month, Caspar Weinberger mused on the events of 1956 and told his listeners that the British need never have withdrawn from the Canal Zone. It was only weakness on the part of the Labour government, he said, that led to this sad outcome. Some of those present knew that it was a Tory war and said as much. No, no, insisted Weinberger, it was all the fault of the dithering socialists. It's a slight relief to know that old Caspar's day is done.

○

I'm off to write a book, secure in the knowledge that Alexander Cockburn will be contributing a column. Happy 75th birthday to the *NS*.

Christopher Hitchens

SR. WHITE, WHY ARE YOU REALLY IN THIS COUNTRY?
I TOLD YOU ALREADY, I'M PART OF A CHURCH GROUP FROM THE US.
I SEE, I SEE...
AND WE'VE COME TO EL SALVADOR FOR AN INVESTIGATION INTO HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS HERE.
OH, I SEE, I SEE...
IS IT SUCH A CRIME?
I'M AFRAID SO..
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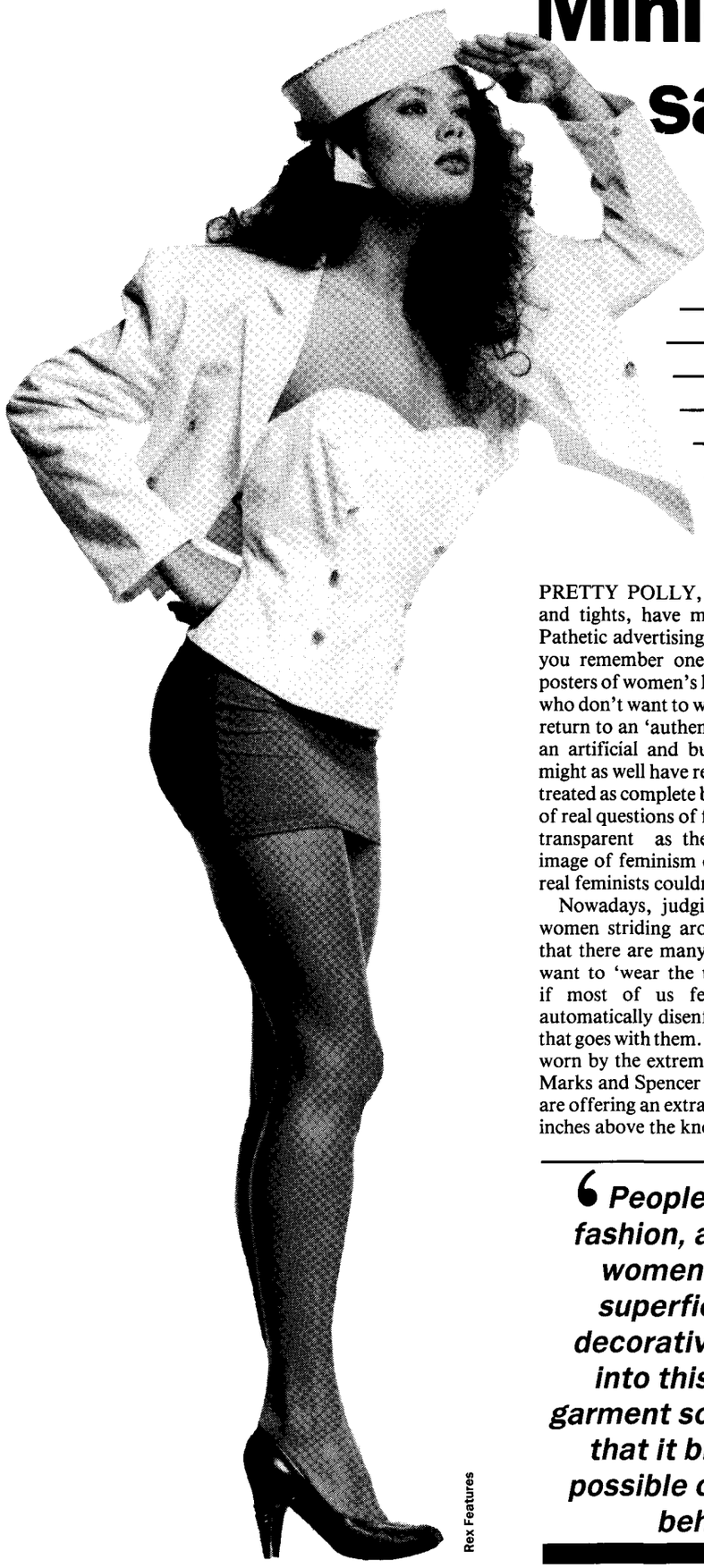
Mini-Politics: saying no in public



Rex Features

The Mini-skirt is back — for power dressing, punk gestures, street cred. But what, asks* SUZANNE MOORE, *does the emblem of the swinging '60s mean in the Thatcherite '80s?

PRETTY POLLY, manufacturers of stockings and tights, have managed to run some Pretty Pathetic advertising campaigns in their time. Do you remember one a few years back — huge posters of women's legs with the caption 'For girls who don't want to wear the trousers?' It implied a return to an 'authentic' feminine identity against an artificial and butch notion of liberation. It might as well have read, 'For girls who want to be treated as complete bimbos'. Yet the glossing over of real questions of female access to power was as transparent as the stockings themselves. The image of feminism could be 'retouched', even if real feminists couldn't.

Nowadays, judging by the masses of young women striding around in mini-skirts, it seems that there are many of us who may not literally want to 'wear the trousers'. However, I doubt if most of us feel that exposing our legs automatically disenfranchises us from the power that goes with them. Mini-skirts are no longer only worn by the extreme or the ultra-trendy — even Marks and Spencer are doing it: 'This season we are offering an extra short length 21 inches — two inches above the knee'. Wow!

> ***'People who denounce fashion, and particularly women's clothes, as superficial or merely decorative, have poured into this insignificant garment so many meanings that it brims over with possible clues to modern behaviour'***

At the American collections, full of Calvin Klein 'slips' and the 'Shortest, Briefest Dresses of Them All', we saw what New Yorkers mean by High Rise. International buyers rushed back home 'to get all their existing stock chopped into minis'.

So what does all this mean? Indeed, does it have to mean anything? Maybe not, but unlike many items of fashion, the mini-skirt is generally perceived to signify *something* — whatever it may be, the '60s, sex or success. It now acts almost as a vacuum, pulling every and any potential meaning into itself. People who denounce fashion, and particularly women's clothes, as superficial or regard it as merely decorative, have poured into this insignificant garment so many meanings that it brims over with possible clues to modern behaviour.

This iconic status allows it to be taken outside the closed world of fashion and read against the economic and political climate. Desmond Morris, who should really stick to talking to monkeys, has a go at this in December's *Elle*, telling us that while short skirts signal liberation, long ones mean 'female subjugation and peasant toil'. The only thing, he says, that has delayed the return of the mini has been the uncertainty in the FT index. Such glib determinism ignores the variety of styles available at the moment and fails to explain how they change so rapidly.

To put it crudely, as Julie Burchill always does, 'You cannot take the temperature of a culture by measuring a hemline, the collective whim of 15 French fag [sic] dressmakers says absolutely nothing about the shift in status and sensibilities of western womanhood'.

Mass style

Yet fashion isn't just about designers. Some styles filter down and become acceptable to the mass market. Others don't. Short skirts have cropped up regularly in the designer shows of the last few years with clothes inspired by physical activity, dance and sport. We've had the tutu and the skating skirt, among others. On the streets the adoption of the mini-skirt in PVC or rubber by female punks was a deliberate rejection of the long, floaty and 'natural' skirts of the late '70s. It was all very synthetic, suggestive and full of shockability.

Now it's no longer just smarties or punks who want to wear mini-skirts. Which is why it's also tempting to read them as a sign of a post-feminist consciousness. Is this perhaps why there is a difference between the flimsy and skimpy clothes of the catwalk and the way that short skirts are actually being worn? In the collections the clothes were all little girlish, on the streets they are far more businesslike and practical and worn with black tights against the cold wind.

Further, it seems that power dressing can now incorporate the short skirt into its corporate identity. The boss as well as her secretary can wear

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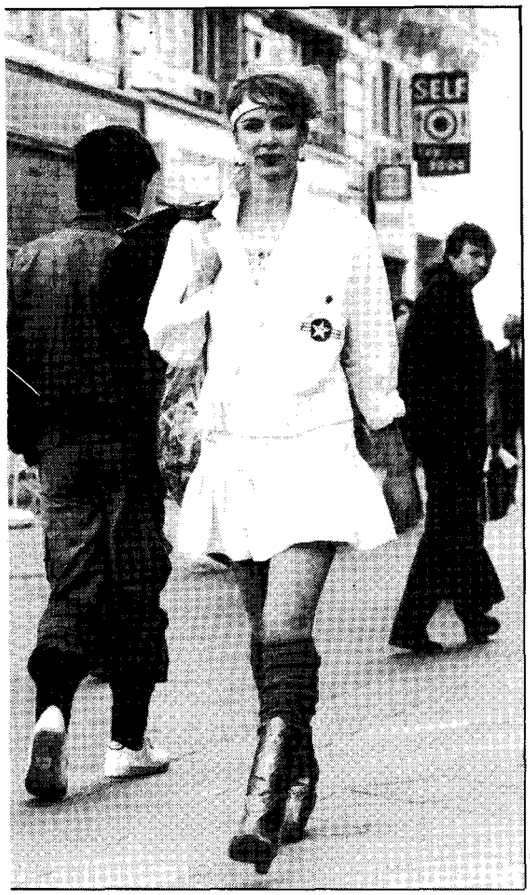

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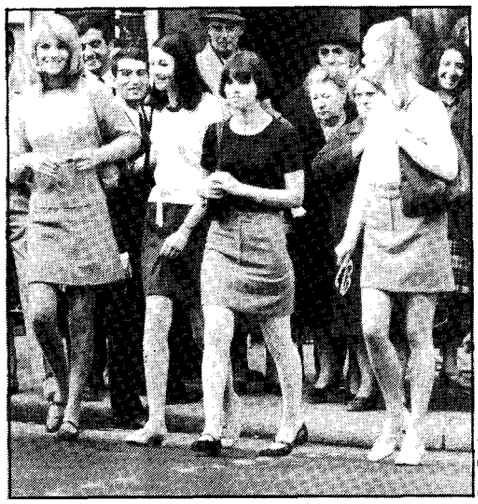

Rex Features

'80s mini (left) — a million miles from '60s innocence (above)

it. Looking like she means business in a mini-skirt and tailored jacket, she can now display her perfectly-toned body and sexual confidence. It's no longer a distraction, but a 'tangible asset.' This may be anathema to some feminists who feel that this mythical world of women 'having it all' is still far away for most of us, and that the tyranny of fashion still excludes all but the adolescent and the anorexic. But fashion is about pleasure as well as pain. About playing with the boundaries of the body. About the constant negotiation between what is public and what is private.

For women, these are always political as well as aesthetic decisions. Can I wear that to work, on the bus, in the pub? We might think that we are signalling sexual autonomy in our 'look, but don't touch' outfit, but for every sophisticated Tom and Harry who understands the rules of the game, there's a Dick that doesn't. For some men, autonomy dressed up is remarkably like availability. Like all those snarling models in the ads — defiance is just another kind of provocation.

The move towards more blatantly sexualised women's clothes, which provides an overall context for the shorter hemlines, is also seen by some as an imaginary working through of some of the dilemmas posed by Aids. For women — and men — taking refuge in monogamous relationships in these days of safe sex, the message is 'Look erotic, but don't deliver'; as designer Antony Price says, 'If the product is the same, then the packaging had better look thrilling.'

Yet of all the meanings we attach to the mini, its '60s connotations are the most powerful. Many of this year's fashion shows had a strong '60s feel. Katherine Hamnett's was completely derived from '60s styles, right down to the psychedelic colours. But it's all very knowing — a million miles away from innocence. For how we perceive the '60s has largely been influenced by Thatcherite discourse; the '60s is what has been repressed in the '80s. Thatcherites talk of the '60s as the time when everything started to go wrong; so it's interesting that designers should visually reclaim the era. But the '60s refracted through '80s sensibilities means something quite different, especially for women. The freedom the mini-skirt symbolised in the swinging '60s was the freedom to say 'Yes'. In the late '80s, it symbolises the freedom to say 'No.' □

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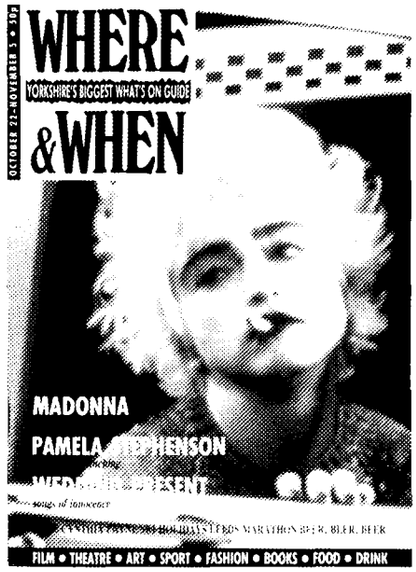

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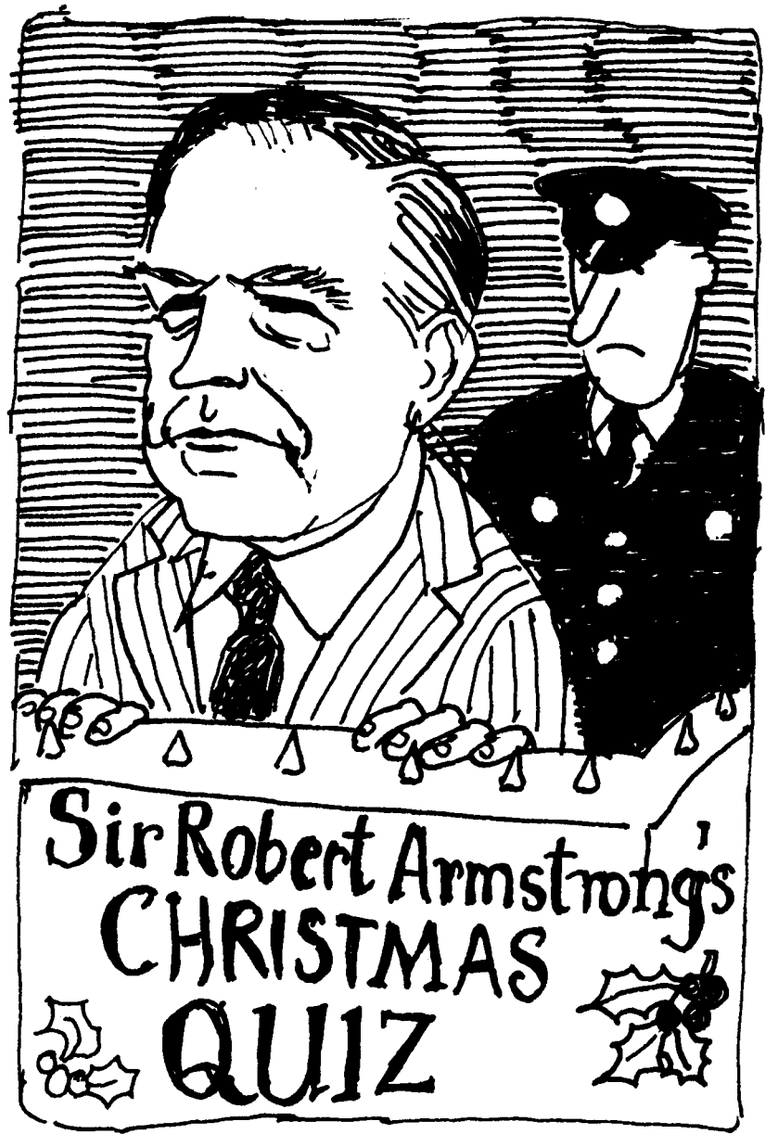

IT WAS, I confess, with some surprise that I learned that I had undertaken the task of setting the 1987 *New Statesman* Christmas Quiz. Indeed, I had no inkling that I had agreed to fulfil this particular engagement, as my last service to the nation before my retirement until the Prime Minister refreshed my memory. "It was at that meeting with Bernard Sheldon and myself last November," she said, "I was in Australia at the time," I pointed out. "Fink" she rasped, "you were subsequently deemed to have been present."

A few days later a buff envelope appeared on my desk. It contained the minutes of that meeting. I now see that I did indeed agree to compile the quiz, and that — somewhat surprisingly — I also sang several stanzas from *Eskimo Nell.* I do not fully understand this, but have no doubt that it represents the truth, or one of its substitutes.

First, a warm-up question. Which ambassador to James I, when asked by a young diplomat how to puzzle his adversaries, answered "tell the truth"?

It was in fact Sir Henry Wotton, who also coined the much-cited aphorism that "An ambassador is an honest man, sent to lie abroad for the good of his country." This got Sir Henry into hot water, and by way of *mitigation he pointed to the double* meaning of the word "lie". The argument was unfortunately robbed of its force inasmuch as he had written the original in Latin, where there was no such ambiguity. None of Sir Henry's discomfiture would have occurred had not the phrase, which had been intended as a private joke, been leaked. Some jokes, I now believe, are not for public consumption.

Never mind. As Kenneth Baker says: "Turn on, tune in, opt out." Let the revels commence!

1) Careers

Who was fired:
a) After being rude to the President's wife?
b) After being rude about the General Secretary's wife?
c) For suggesting tactical voting?
d) For not giving a damn about the racist Labour party?
e) For attacking the party's defence policy in *The Times?*
f) After a row over Labour's arts policy?
g) Having been "semi-detached" anyway?
h) For having too many nipples?
i) Over gold jewellery that hadn't been?
j) For failure on a foreign field?

Who was hired:
k) For his hitherto unknown expertise in South East Asian computer systems?
l) Despite not being Lord Young?
m) Despite not applying (at least two answers here)
n) Because he was not excessively right wing and had never smoked pot?

2) References

Who said of what:
a) "It acquired an ironic life of its own. It escaped into gossip columns and dinner table conversations and pursued me round the world last month to the unsuitable venue of an international conference on electrochemistry in Hawaii"
b) "It is like entrusting Myra Hindley with charge of a children's home"

c) It "is costing us dear among the pensioners"
d) "It's a bit dodgy"
e) [It is] "An irresponsible organ of left wing opinion".
f) "Is the same party that was founded 70 years ago. It is still the same cruel, crude, and murderous party"
g) "It's the wrong time, the wrong place and has been done in the wrong way"
h) "I remember it as being very enjoyable"
i) "I think you can probably do this using school children in Milton Keynes these days"
j) "It is like a Victorian gaol"

3) Dialectics

Who said to whom:
a) "One of these days you people are going to have to learn some manners"
b) "You have a right to speak and a right to be wrong. And you exercise both rights extensively"
c) "Nice to see you again, Mr Ambassador"

4) Geography

Where:
a) Did a submerged lump of rock arouse excessive excitement?
b) Did something "larger than a fish" arouse excessive excitement?
c) Did miners work more hours a day than in Wales, but still play football?
d) Did a Visit inspire the *Sun* headline 'A Loon Again"?

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e) Did Salvador Dali have his hair cut for the first time in four years?
f) Did 12 men strip to their underpants?
g) Did the sale of a kidney make a British front page splash?
h) Did Lord Buckethead stand for election?
i) Did a head of state announce that he owned three guitars and a broken freezer and was "the poorest president in the world"?
j) Did the parents of 26 children see red?
k) Did James Baldwin see his play *The Amen Corner* premiered?
l) Did only 42 per cent say yes?
m) Was a boy eaten by a polar bear?
n) Was there a tiff in a tearoom?

5) General knowledge

Who:
a) Explained: "In those circumstances the choice is again posed — and this is the classical choice — of either exterminating everything that you stand for and, I'll use the phrase, "the flower of your youth" or using the resources you've got to make any occupation totally untenable."
b) Ceased being the shortest male Tory MP?

c) Thought that God might be using him as a prophet?
d) Predicted that "Gas chambers will be here within seven to ten years for lesbians, gay men, and socialists"?
e) Portrayed his boss as a dithering elitist liberal; then took decisive and irreversible action himself?
f) Announced that a certain verbal habit made her "turn round and say 'Right, I also like to see what you do?' "
g) Protested that he was not the fifth man?
h) Made a joke about doors and had to apologise?
i) Had his collar felt by *Labour Research?*

6) Biography

Of those who died this year, who:
a) Was a "flibbety gibbit, a will o' the wisp, a clown"?
b) Once won a libel action over an article that described him as "fruit-flavoured"?
c) Famously misportrayed Hans Christian Anderson?
d) Wrote a book with Peter Kellner?
e) Wrote two books under the pseudonym "Ian Stuart" and 26 — mostly thrillers — under his own name?
f) Was, according to Peter Wright, an MI5 agent?
g) Was a novelist and chemist who survived Auschwitz?
h) Was briefly married to Orson Welles?
i) Was born Frederick Austerlitz?
j) Was famous for considerably more than his 15 minutes?

7) Economics

Account for:
a) £400 and a small place in Marbella
b) £195 a day in Wimbledon
c) £314,500, mostly in Australia
d) £25,000 and a suspended sentence
e) £24.75 million and the Yasuda Fire and Marine Insurance Company

f) £70 for 15 minutes
g) 110lb of cannabis

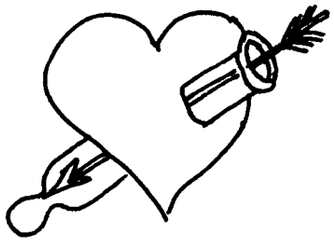
It was the year of the big libel actions. Who got from whom:
h) £450,000?
i) £500,000?
j) £260,000?
k) And what was the biggest libel award before that?
i) £120,000 or
ii) £90,000 or
iii) £55,000?

8) Rhetoric

Which election manifesto promised:
a) [We] firmly support the police in the battle against crime."
b) "We will work with the police to get more police on the beat"
c) "We will increase the number of police further to ensure a stronger police presence on our streets, to combat crime and to protect the public".
d) "We will give greater emphasis to the prevention of avoidable illness and the promotion of good health — to make the NHS more truly a health service and not merely a sickness service"
e) "Our priorities are to promote good health, not merely to treat illness. This means targeting resources in health education, promoting healthy eating [and] tightening up food labelling"
f) "Our policy of firm and fair immigration control . . ."
g) "We accept the need for immigration control . . ."
h) "Firm but fair immigration controls are essential for harmonious and improving community relations"
i) "The constitutionalist pedants, the ledgerbook minds will be resolutely crushed beneath the iron heel of a victorious people marching on the road to destiny."

And which party:
j) "has the vision and commitment to stimulate the energies, the skills and the will to succeed of the British people"
k) has "a vision based on the aspirations of millions of individuals and their families — their hopes, their needs, their security?"
l) has a "vision of a Britain united, a Britain confident, compassionate and competitive"

9) Biology



a) Which company chairman performed five times a night, to the admiration of the shareholders?
b) Who, according to his solicitor, was a client of people "at the bottom end of their trade?"
c) Who unwisely invited the press to "put a tail on me"?
d) Which MP confessed to Hellenic nookie?
e) Which prime minister was romancing when he should have been conferencing?
f) Which unlikely celebrity lived in Ambleside Avenue?
g) Who achieved brief fame as "Randy Rumpo the Bonking Barrister"?

10) Mistakes

(a) "It will be read with pleasure and interest by over 3 million ordinary working people, and this will ensure the commercial success of the venture" (*NS*, 9 January). How many did?
(b) "Lets say ciao to this bambino — permanently" (*Sun* editorial, 17 November). Why?
(c) "We will see who has the deepest pocket" — who had?
(d) "Be part of it" — how many finally were?
(e) Who turned out to be on Simon Hughes' list?

11) History

In the *New Statesman* 50 years ago:
(a) "Herr X is a much better and more sympathetic speaker than the other Nazi leaders. He has the voice of a human being and does not talk to you as if he were a demented sergeant-major who thought himself to be a mixture of Isaiah and the Bull of Bashan." Who was the charming Nazi?
(b) "Mr X has written a Black Guide to England, explained his own conflict with English caste-consciousness, sketched the intangible but very real battle-front of North and South . . . and much else." Who had written what?
(c) "Last week the British Government refused to grant passport facilities to an English journalist to visit Spain . . . Viscount Cranbourne, explaining the matter in the House, said that 'His request was refused in view of his past military activities in Spain'". Who was it?
(d) "To me the clue to this poetry lies in its artificiality, which gives it a peculiar though important position to which the term 'great' cannot be applied. These poems have, with rare exceptions, no immediate contact with experience." Whose poems?
(e) "Dapper was the word that came into my head, when I first saw him. He looked as if he had just come out of a hot bath. He had just had his hair cut, his beard trimmed and his suit pressed. His hair and beard are grey and his face a fresh pink". Who was Kingsley Martin visiting in Mexico?
(f) "Probably one of the most talented and prodigiously successful people the world has ever known — a man of infinite charm and adaptability whose adaptability however, makes him inferior to a more compact and worldy competitor in his own sphere, like Cole Porter."

Answers on p.51

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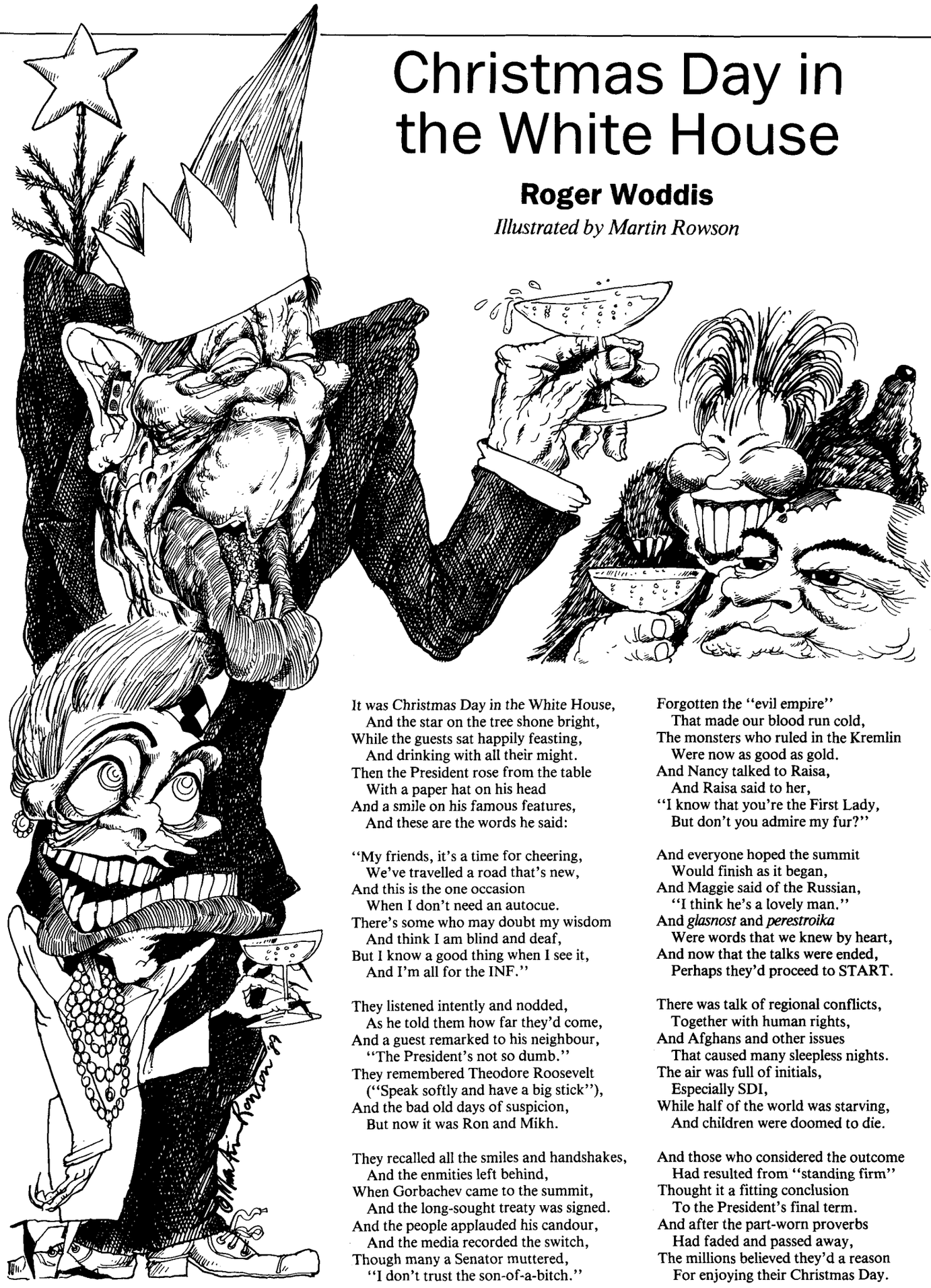
Christmas Day in the White House

Roger Woddis

Illustrated by Martin Rowson



It was Christmas Day in the White House,
And the star on the tree shone bright,
While the guests sat happily feasting,
And drinking with all their might.
Then the President rose from the table
With a paper hat on his head
And a smile on his famous features,
And these are the words he said:

"My friends, it's a time for cheering,
We've travelled a road that's new,
And this is the one occasion
When I don't need an autocue.
There's some who may doubt my wisdom
And think I am blind and deaf,
But I know a good thing when I see it,
And I'm all for the INF."

They listened intently and nodded,
As he told them how far they'd come,
And a guest remarked to his neighbour,
"The President's not so dumb."
They remembered Theodore Roosevelt
("Speak softly and have a big stick"),
And the bad old days of suspicion,
But now it was Ron and Mikh.

They recalled all the smiles and handshakes,
And the enmities left behind,
When Gorbachev came to the summit,
And the long-sought treaty was signed.
And the people applauded his candour,
And the media recorded the switch,
Though many a Senator muttered,
"I don't trust the son-of-a-bitch."

Forgotten the "evil empire"
That made our blood run cold,
The monsters who ruled in the Kremlin
Were now as good as gold.
And Nancy talked to Raisa,
And Raisa said to her,
"I know that you're the First Lady,
But don't you admire my fur?"

And everyone hoped the summit
Would finish as it began,
And Maggie said of the Russian,
"I think he's a lovely man."
And *glasnost* and *perestroika*
Were words that we knew by heart,
And now that the talks were ended,
Perhaps they'd proceed to START.

There was talk of regional conflicts,
Together with human rights,
And Afghans and other issues
That caused many sleepless nights.
The air was full of initials,
Especially SDI,
While half of the world was starving,
And children were doomed to die.

And those who considered the outcome
Had resulted from "standing firm"
Thought it a fitting conclusion
To the President's final term.
And after the part-worn proverbs
Had faded and passed away,
The millions believed they'd a reason
For enjoying their Christmas Day.

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Journey without maps

Fiona Macmillan, Belfast
The next time Julia Pascal (*NS* 4 Dec.) visits another country to "research a future play" she could perhaps do a bit more advance research with a map! Ulster Television were perfectly correct to state that the Prince and Princess of Wales returned from Enniskillen (not Belfast) to Britain. Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom, while not being part of (Great) Britain, which consists of Scotland, Wales and England. Amazingly the "natives" have got it right about exactly where they live.

While agreeing that the non-extension of the 1967 Abortion Act has had tragic and adverse effects on women living in Northern Ireland, it is a gross exaggeration to claim that "sixty thousand women travelled from Northern Ireland to England for abortions this year". Sarah Spencer, who attended the International Tribunal on Abortion in Belfast in October stated that "since 1978, over 20,000 women travelled to Britain from Northern Ireland to have abortions" (*NS* 16 Oct.).

Perhaps the people of West Belfast have become used to the "tourists" in their midst. However, I still find it annoying that people come to Northern Ireland with such obvious pre-conceptions as Julia Pascal — British army helicopters circle over my house and place of work in South Belfast, not just over the hunger strikers graves — they watch everybody!

Belfast may appear to Julia Pascal as having the look of "a Latin-American shanty town" but from where I'm sitting it looks like the same old picture. London: Cultural Imperialism.

Closet Tories parade

John Pilger, London SW4
Ben Pimlott's column (*NS* 11 Dec.) is standard fare these days as Labour's "realists", "reviewists" and assorted closet conservatives join the tail end of Mrs Thatcher's parade.

Pimlott writes that "the overwhelming majority" of the electorate "have never been persuaded that nationalisation in any form is a good idea". Where did this little gem of "reality" come from? Which election was lost on the issue of nationalisation alone? And when was *genuine* nationalisation ever offered to the voters?

The British people have had every right to be cynical about and dissatisfied with their "nationalised industries", which were "taken over" not by public bodies wholly accountable to them, but by the same old chieftains of capitalism and established patronage, and their restrictive practices: i.e. disdain for research and development, lack of re-investment and disregard for the consumer.

The truth is that we have never enjoyed real public ownership; and before we allow the Pimlotts to hijack the term, we ought to remind ourselves that the principle remains unfulfilled and has never been more urgently needed.

Hands off

Hilary Collier, Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford
Ms Loach (*NS* 4 Dec.), please tell your companion who wants to 'take home and hang on her wall' the 'extraordinarily handsome Secretary [of the Oxford Union] Noel Sy-Quia' that he is already hanging on my wall . . .

Practical point on porn

Colin Byrne, Mitcham, Surrey
I'm sure it's all very mould breaking and taboo shattering to have articles on porn (*NS* 11 Dec.) illustrated by pictures from naughty magazines. And to be honest, watchers of the current editor's previous exploits at *New Socialist* did wonder how long it would be before articles on the politics of orgasm and the left analysis of the mini-skirt started appearing in the *New Weirman*.

Just a practical point: such pictures do make reading the magazine on the train home rather difficult, as your average punter may not be so adept as your average trendy socialist at telling your average socialist from your average *Playboy*-buyer. I don't really want to start hiding my copy of the magazine inside my *Guardian* in order to read the damn thing in public.

Editor's note: To be even more honest, Colin Byrne is a member of the public relations staff at the Labour Party in Walworth Road. He had the grace to sound embarrassed when we rang to check this. For the record, Melissa Benn's article was commissioned by my predecessor and the two photographs used to illustrate it were chosen by the author and art editor. In my view, all three decisions were right.

Still struggling in Kenya

Dr Nancy Murray, Lexington, Mass., USA
Did Stephen Howe read Maina wa Kinyatti's book *Kenya's Freedom Struggle: the Dedan Kimathi Papers* before reviewing it? (*NS* 20 Nov.) It seems strange that he made no mention of the substance of the book — portions of Dedan Kimathi's diary, letters he wrote and received, and records of the "Kenya Parliament", the supreme organ of the armed struggle. By devoting his entire attention to Kinyatti's supposed ideological slant, Howe misses an opportunity to convey to readers a sense of what key participants in the Kenya Land Freedom Army thought they were fighting for. Howe's charge that Kinyatti "greatly overrates" the movement's "ideological coherence" is remiss since in his introduction Kinyatti makes precisely the point that a lack of ideological clarity was its crucial weakness.

The work on Kenya coming out of Cambridge University may indeed be impressive. But this is no reason to dismiss the work of a Kenyan historian who, before his imprisonment nearly 6 years ago, had for at least as long collected original letters and documents relating to the struggle and interviewed survivors of the Kenya Land Freedom Army.

Social for wild radicals

Matthew Huntbach, Young Liberals National Committee, London E13
Sarah Benton (*NS* 4 Dec.) is wrong to think that Liberals would find it difficult to form factions. The enthusiastically fought three-way presidential campaign in 1983 is probably the clearest guide to the factions that could emerge. The extraordinary one-day campaign for the negotiating team this year showed that Liberals are adept at the techniques of factional in-fighting when necessary.

Organised factions do not exist because the present constitution with its widely spread power-base makes it virtually impossible for them to operate effectively. Liberal Assembly is not dominated by wild radicals manipulating the system to pass unrepresentative policy. It is dominated by people for whom it is largely a holiday and a social occasion, people who come to hear speeches from the "big names", and people who are more interested in picking up tips on day-to-day organisational affairs than in passing policy. Such people will quietly support the leadership unless, as in 1986, it tries to push through something manifestly stupid and does it in an inept manner.

The proposed new constitution cuts out all these people, leaving in fact the wild radicals. The SDP negotiating team appears to be too bound by prejudice to have noticed this, despite the helpful hint dropped by Liberal Party Council. Party Council, which the proposed Federal Conference resembles, regularly passes motions which Assembly would not dare let through, and which would severely embarass the leadership but for the fact that its knowledge about the party it is supposed to lead appears to be limited to what appears in the national press.

The election of Federal Conference members will become a biennial bloodbath once those Liberals currently opposed to the new constitution have resigned themselves to making the best of it, and the establishment has been forced to respond by building a "loyalist" faction. It is a sign of the fundamental decency of radical Liberals, and our willingness to see realignment succeed, that we are willing to point this out to those who oppose us.

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SHORT STORY

Sue Hillwood-Harris

Christmas roses

Shena Mackay

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Everybody was rather morose after the lunchtime celebration. Only Mr Hadleigh, who had been making trips to the library staffroom throughout the afternoon, retained something of the Christmas spirit. On the last of these he had decanted the remains of the sherry into a mug and carried it to his desk under cover of a leaflet on hypothermia, and sat down to research a crime novel featuring a six-foot black woman detective. His happiness, as they say, was to be short-lived.

"Excuse me."

"Yes?"

"Are you the Information Officer?"

"That's what it says." He pointed in a jocular way to the tinsel-wreathed notice on his desk.

"It's about old Mrs Ridley."

Hadleigh focused on the woman in a sleety anorak who stood braced in front of him.

"Only she's in hospital."

"Oh dear, I'm sorry to hear that."

"Yes, I wouldn't have bothered you, only she's often mentioned you, how much she enjoys your little chats and how helpful you've been, getting her books and that. It's just that my husband and I are going to be away over Christmas, and we're her only visitors, and I thought perhaps you might like to pop in."

"Well I'm going to be away myself," Hadleigh lied. "Otherwise, of course . . ."

"She's in Betchworth Ward, in the General. It would really give her a boost. She thinks the world of you."

Hadleigh was conscious of a small queue forming behind her — mothers seeking information for school holiday projects — and of the library manager's eye behind a poinsettia.

"I'll see what I can do."

"Bless you!"

"Have you any books . . .?" a woman started to say.

"No, I'm sorry, we haven't."

AS THE STAFF collected their coats to go home he attempted to persuade some of his female colleagues to visit Mrs Ridley instead of him.

"It's easy for you — no responsibilities. We've all got our families to look after," someone pointed out.

"It won't hurt him to think of somebody else for a change," he heard as he went out into the night, branded a selfish bachelor in his forties, whose private life aroused no speculation. They might have been surprised to know that his sober trousers concealed boxer shorts sprigged with holly. The rear lights of their cars disappeared, and a last bicycle with reflectors on its pedals, leaving him standing at the bus stop.

The library closed early on Christmas Eve, and Hadleigh chose that afternoon for slouching towards Betchworth. He had to take a bus and it was getting dark when he arrived in an unfamiliar part of town.

"Mrs Ridley's gone, I'm afraid," he was told by a nurse in a tinsel tiara.

"Gone? Oh well, she had a good innings . . ."

He turned to go, making a mental note to tear up her membership card and tickets in the New Year.

"She went home this morning."

As he walked back to the bus stop, eating a bag of crisps from the WRVS shop, he realised that he was in the street where Mrs Ridley lived. He knew her address from the cards he posted to her from the library, informing her that books she had ordered had arrived, and the name of her house, Wisteria Lodge, had struck him as having a wistful mauve grandeur. He passed a small parade of shops and it occurred to him that he should have brought her something. A butcher with his bloody white coat bosoming out over a belt was cleaving a broken foreleg and the feathers of pheasants hanging in pairs from hooks ruffled in the breeze from his sleeve; however it would have seemed tactless to arrive carrying a corpse after Mrs Ridley's own recent brush with mortality. The only other shop still open was called Prezzies. Hadleigh blinked at the plush toys like garish gargoyles, the baskets of cosmetics.

"I'm looking for a present for a lady," he told the assistant.

"Something saucy?"

She flapped a scarlet suspender belt at him. Hadleigh recoiled from its dangling red legs as if from a tarantula, blushing in his correct surmise that she thought he might like it for himself. He escaped with a bar of lavender soap and a bunch of dried rosebuds which he had been too embarrassed to put back when he had discovered that they cost nearly seven pounds.

Wisteria Lodge proved to be dappled like a giraffe with patches of flaking plaster, its front door lit by a milky glass globe.

"Why have you brought me dead roses?"

"Not dead. Dried. Smell!"

"Musty."

> ***"It would have seemed tactless to arrive carrying a corpse after Mrs Ridley's own brush with mortality"***

"No, they're fragrant, like *pot pourri*."

"Dead," said Mrs Ridley, standing there in a man's paisley dressing-gown on the step.

The roses looked sepia in the porchlight that drained their faces.

"Perhaps you would have preferred something saucy?" he snapped.

"I wouldn't mind something piquant," she agreed, "after that hospital food. Something tasty. There's an Indian takeaway down the road."

"Closed. This *is* Christmas Eve you know."

"Well they're not Christians are they?"

"I've no idea. Look I'd better be going. I just popped round to see how you are and to wish you a merry Christmas."

"Well, I suppose you'd better come in, as you seem to have nothing better to do."

"Look, I could be at a party now," protested Hadleigh as he followed her into a large room, with a small electric fire in the marble fireplace where their breath hung in the air.

"I daresay we all could. If we'd been invited to one."

HADLEIGH SAT DOWN on a cold chair, wondering why that bossy woman in the library had thought that Mrs Ridley thought the world of him, when she was so clearly displeased by his visit. He blew on his fingers, searching for a quotation from Mary Baker Eddy or Ella Wheeler Wilcox that might break the ice; he remembered their names occurring more than once in their chats, which had surely always been on an impersonal level. Either Mrs Ridley's life was so empty of friends that she had felt compelled to embellish her relationship with him, or that woman had got it all wrong.

"May I offer you a drink?"

"Thank you." He pursed his lips in anticipation, and memory, of sweet sherry.

"I hope you're not driving?"

She sloshed an enormous measure of whisky into each of two cut-glass tumblers.

"No."

"Well, happy Christmas." She raised her glass. "Did you come on your bicycle?"

"I haven't got a bike."

"Really? I always imagine you in bicycle clips, pedalling home in the dusk to your lonely bedsitter, wearing one of those luminous bands, with lights on your feet. Funny."

"Isn't it." He gagged on his drink. "I don't suppose you've got any ice?"

"No. It's so cold in here I don't bother."

Hadleigh wished he had brought her that leaflet on hypothermia. He thought he could detect its early stages in himself. He tried to formulate a sentence which would explain that he led a varied and interesting social life, had many friends, none of whom wore cycle clips, and that he did not live in a lonely bedsitter.

"Actually . . ." he began.

"I'm afraid I shall have to turn you out soon. I want to have a little nap before the midnight service."

"Do you think you ought to go to Midnight Mass? It's so cold, and you've just come out of hospital."

"Oh, don't be such an old woman. Besides I shall be getting a lift. Thank goodness those poisonous Robinsons are away this year."

"Robinsons? Who Robinsons?"

"Interfering neighbours who make my life a misery. At least I shall be able to spend Christmas as I want this year. One more for the road, and then you must be off."

An old woman pedalling away into a lonely dusk, that was what his good deed had reduced him to. Hadleigh felt anger dissolve into self-pity, and harden again. He realised that he would have to get out soon, before he said something which he would regret, or found himself weeping disgraceful boozy tears at the altar-rail in a candlelit church. He drained his glass and got to his feet. He heard himself admiring a blurred and prickly table decoration; he heard Mrs Ridley's voice explain, "It's a tip I got from Dear Katie in the *TV Times*, years ago . . ."

And then it seemed that he heard nothing more until he woke fully clothed on his bed to the sound of bells, with fragments of nightmare like broken glass in his brain, and a bar of lavender soap in his pocket, like a going-home present from a children's party.

In an unfamiliar part of town, a letter lay in a postbox near a church. It had been posted just before midnight and was addressed in a steady, old-fashioned hand to County Hall:

". . . I wish to make a formal complaint against one of your employees who invaded my house with a bunch of dead flowers, became disgustingly intoxicated and babbled lewdly about saucy underwear and threatened to show me his own. I had to send him home in a taxi, at my own expense, as he appeared to have no money . . . □

Shena Mackay's collection of stories, Dreams of Dead Women's Handbags, *was published by Heinemann this summer. 'Christmas Roses' is a new story written for the* New Statesman.

Early in the New Year we shall be publishing a story by Bernard Mac Laverty.

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ARTS

CINEMA

Appearances are everything

Judith Williamson

Wish You Were Here (15)
Odeon Haymarket

"Up your bum, up your bum, up your bum, up your bum, up your bum, up your bum . . ."

NOTHING IN THE PRESS prepared me for the disturbing experience of watching *Wish You Were Here*. It was hailed everywhere as a delightful teenage rebellion romp and I went expecting something both funny and liberating, as, clearly, did the predominantly young, predominantly female audience which packed the Odeon Haymarket at six o'clock on a Wednesday night.

Perhaps I should have known better since David Leland, whose directorial debut this is, was scriptwriter on *Personal Services*, a film which by no stretch of the imagination could be called "charming". Nevertheless, that is one of the adjectives most consistently applied by critics to *Wish You Were Here*, and the publicity image of Emily Lloyd sitting on a seaside railing seems to bear it out. At the same time the film is set up as "naughty" since it tells the earlier part of Cynthia Payne's story, a prequel to *Personal Services*, following her adolescence in a small seaside town in the postwar years and charting her supposed rebellion against middle-class values.

The period is evoked by an excess of kitch — the sort of '50s props like Craven A signs which now cost a fortune in Camden Market and the sort of wide-angle shots that Sunday magazines use to photograph the interiors of houses which couldn't possibly belong to their readers because the wallpaper is too horrid. Thus caught between the desirability and undesirability of what it depicts, the film is suffused with a sensibility of fashionable distaste.

This is exactly what kitch is, but whereas usually it involves an ironic relationship to objects removed from their original context, here, objects returned to their historical period retain all the curiosity of their original removal. The past becomes a kind of retro-unchic boutique filled with what has been plundered from it.

If the props buyer is never quite certain whether the '50s are hip (now) or un-hip (then) what *is* quite clear in class terms is just how unpleasant its inhabitants were. I have gone on a lot in this column about Lower-Middle-Class Comic Imagery, used to represent working-class aspirations in *Prick Up Your Ears*; here, that all-purpose *LMC* is used, if possible even more perniciously, to represent what critics have unanimously called *middle*-class values. This slippage is supposed to make the rebellious Linda into a kind of revolutionary working-class heroine fighting off middle-class hypocrisy (mainly by saying "Up your bum" incessantly).

But the film's aesthetics (and looks are its main form of comment) say otherwise. The sense of comic distaste that constitutes kitch is fundamentally a form of snobbery: in loosely symbolic terms, those yukky people with shiny suits and net curtains aren't the *middle* class (heaven forbid) but a sort of generalised "lower class". (Of course, a film like *Maurice* is about small-minded middle-class morality, but nobody in it *looks* so horrible, and certainly no one in it is *funny*.) *Wish You Were Here*, however, is peopled with characters whose big noses, red faces or sticky-out ears (which produced a good laugh) turn them into cartoon characters, and who, while they supposedly represent middle-class mores, really represent all that the middle class despises. Linda, in contrast, has a directly-presented prettiness which places her, in the film's visual hierarchy, above them: like the only real character in a comic strip, she up-your-bums her way through the small-town world whose problem becomes, not its social codes, but the fact that it is uglier than her.

This is epitomised in the film's opening sequence when a fat, middle-aged woman in an ill-fitting short dress tap dances on the promenade. It is meant to be funny: but of course if she were young and pretty it would merely be cute. The inseparability of these values is something the film never comes to grips with, since it employs cuteness (Linda's) as its radical term.

But besides being a form of displaced snobbery, this device is ultimately self-defeating since the comic disgust which is the film's only consistent mode of representation also pervades its chosen ground of rebellion — sex. In a film where a fat woman dancing and a dog chewing a Durex are high points of humour, sexuality appears as grotesque as the lower-middle-class which represses it. Sex is supposed to be subversive but is presented as absolutely horrible: the red, panting face of Linda's bus-conductor boyfriend as he comes too soon on their first night; the verbal abuse of her father's friend Eric (Tom Bell) as he gropes in her knickers — these are among the most upsetting scenes I have ever had to watch in the cinema.

So when Linda jumps on a chair in a restaurant at the end and yells, "I like willies," it is quite impossible to see why. The film's central confusion is that what the narrative presents as her "liberation", the imagery and *mise-en-scène* presents as humiliation. When she lies on a bed begging Eric to put his arms around her while he pulls her dress off, you could have heard a pin drop in the previously giggling, whispering, sweet-wrapper-rustling audience. The distress was palpable.

This is partly because Emily Lloyd does act as if she had real feelings. Yet the film never explores the contradictions of her situation, it merely exploits them. If there is one adjective *I* would use to describe the film it is *painful*. This applies — in different senses — both to the gruesome distortions of its clichéd humour and to the depiction of some of the truly hurtful moments of adolescence. Most of all, it is the product of their combination. Neither charming nor naughty, what is as depressing as the film itself is the fact that no one has thought even to comment on its one binding quality — the perception of sex, class and history entirely in terms of grotesque appearances. If this is invisible to our national press it only shows how disturbingly deep in the British sensibility such perceptions lie. □

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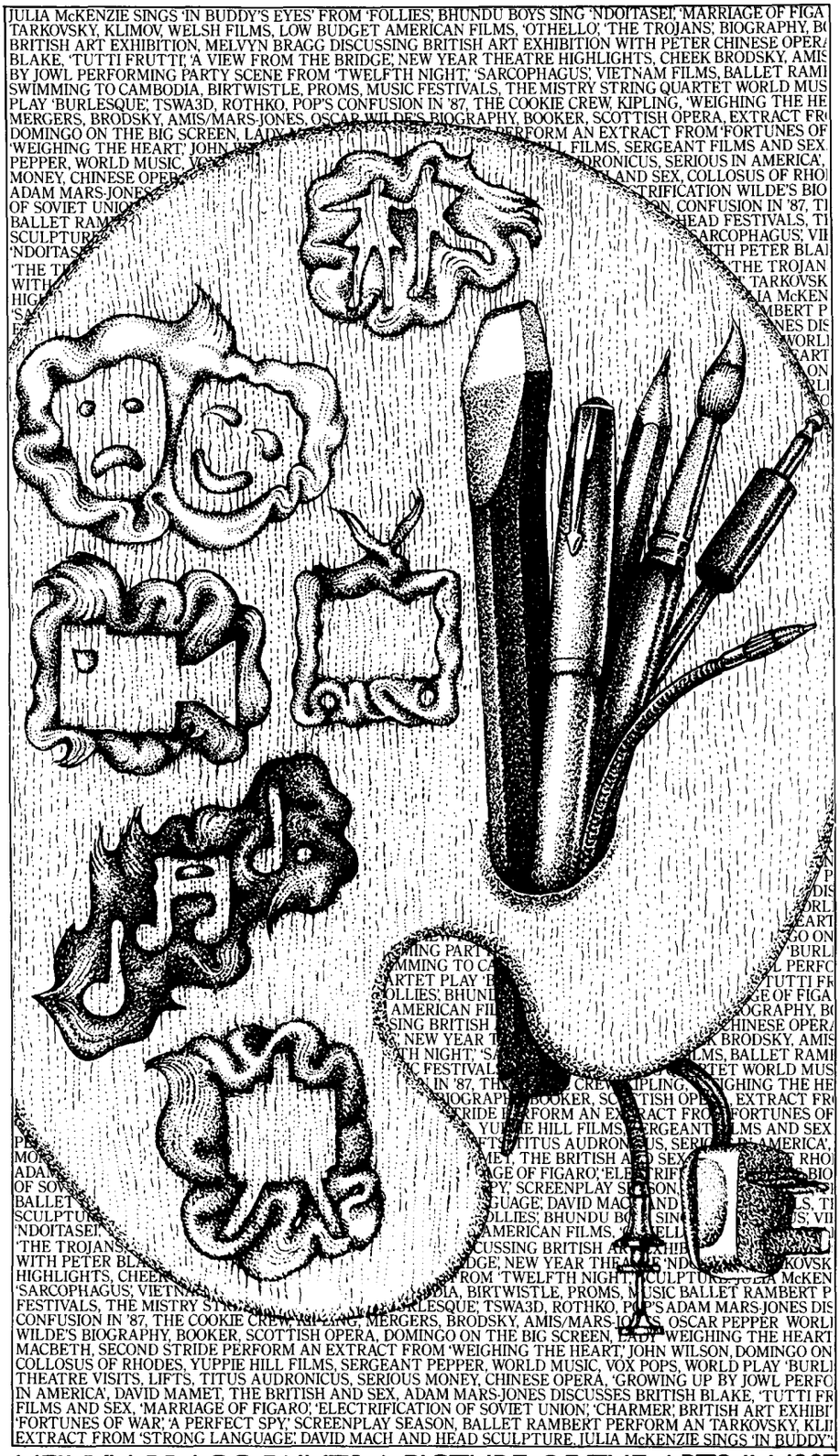
JULIA McKENZIE SINGS 'IN BUDDY'S EYES' FROM 'FOLLIES', BHUNDU BOYS SING 'NDOITASEI', 'MARRIAGE OF FIGA
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BY JOWL PERFORMING PARTY SCENE FROM 'TWELFTH NIGHT', 'SARCOPHAGUS', VIETNAM FILMS, BALLET RAMI
SWIMMING TO CAMBODIA, BIRTWISTLE, PROMS, MUSIC FESTIVALS, THE MISTRY STRING QUARTET WORLD MUS
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MACBETH, SECOND STRIDE PERFORM AN EXTRACT FROM 'WEIGHING THE HEART', JOHN WILSON, DOMINGO ON
COLLOSUS OF RHODES, YUPPIE HILL FILMS, SERGEANT PEPPER, WORLD MUSIC, VOX POPS, WORLD PLAY 'BURL
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'FORTUNES OF WAR', 'A PERFECT SPY,' SCREENPLAY SEASON, BALLET RAMBERT PERFORM AN TARKOVSKY, KLI
EXTRACT FROM 'STRONG LANGUAGE', DAVID MACH AND HEAD SCULPTURE, JULIA McKENZIE SINGS 'IN BUDDY'S

MELVYN BRAGG PAINTS A PICTURE OF THE ARTS IN 1987

ARTS REVIEW OF THE YEAR

INTRODUCED BY LORD OLIVIER.

SUNDAY AT 10·30PM

LWT

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A year of music

Stumped for last-minute presents? Up to the eyebrows in record tokens? Or simply in need of a handy reminder of what the pop, jazz and classical scenes have been up to in the last 12 months? Our columnists, as ever, are happy to help

Pop

THE CHARGES THAT ROCK has traditionally laid at pop's door are that it is plastic, manufactured, inauthentic — in other words, lacking humanity. When pop has been felt to be particularly formulaic, superficial and stylised, renewal has been sought by looking to the direct expression of black music, its supposed rooted earthiness.

There have been two notable examples of this phenomenon. First was the '60s bohemian marriage of R&B sensuality with artschool seriousness, in the struggle against Tin Pan Alley sanitised sentimentality and triviality; then came the mid-'80s shift away from rock to soul and funk, a reaction against both the "sterility" of cerebral/introspective alternative music and the glut of pretty boys scoring hits with trite two-finger synth-pop.

The problem for rock opposition in 1987 has been that its customary reproaches to pop no longer apply. Almost all the groups and singers that dominated the charts this year — U2, George Michael, The Communards, The Christians, Wet Wet Wet, Simply Red, Terence Trent D'Arby, The Housemartins, Blow Monkeys — have moved in specifically to *rectify* the perceived deficiency of humanity. The litany "When Did You Last Hear a Good Song?", the lambasts against "synthetic" pop, have all become redundant. Pop 1987 was choc-a-bloc with "good songs", was human-all-too-human, warm and fleshy to the max.

Most successful pop this year was made by people ashamed of pop, embarrassed by its frivolity, transience, care-lessness: eager to get pop to grow up, face its responsibilities and be concerned. (Live Aid was the pivotal point in the establishment of this new hegemony of progressive pop — pop's coming of age.) And whether it was the strenuous efforts of these groups to sound "authentic" (Wet Wet Wet recorded their *Popped In Souled Out* LP in Willie Mitchell's legendary Deep South recording shack), or the massive success of re-released songs by their role models (Ben E. King, Sam Cooke, Jackie Wilson, Nina Simone, Marvin Gaye), "real soul" was oppressively omnipresent, rather than something precious and elusive.

What made pop intolerable in 1987 was that it was swamped with a certain hyper-real representation of "humanity": its universal voice was a grotesque caricature of soul-baring. Blackness has become a signifier for being *more human* (just look at the Kronenburg and Budweiser ads), with the genealogy of this condensation lying in two dodgy notions: that a history of suffering has given blacks a greater

George Michael: model for desire

depth of feeling and that blacks are more *natural* than uptight whites, more at one with their bodies.

Paradoxically, it was the supremely white-sounding post-R&B rock band **U2** who most personified the hegemony of "black" values. The Edge's desolate guitar feeds into widespread contemporary desire for awe and space, but Bono's voice brings it all back home, is rapidly becoming an over-bearing, unbearable pastiche of intimacy, gushing sincerity and messianic compassion. Their massive LP *The Joshua Tree* had nods towards American roots (harmonica, slide guitar, the blues), evidence of political engagement . . . but ultimately U2's ascendancy in '87 came across a little like Attenborough's *Ghandi* or *Cry Freedom* — outwardly a positive phenomenon, populist but with unimpeachable credentials, a noble effort within the terms of liberal consensus. Perhaps, like Attenborough's films and Live Aid, U2 had critics carping because they didn't make people feel bad about *themselves*; evil was always somewhere other than in your own breast.

Pop's maturation, its sickly surfeit of care, has, with invincible logic, impelled marginal rock into a fascination with inhumanity, brutality and waste (rock reinvents its difference from pop again and again by espousing the unsellable). Now that "liberated" sexual and emotional expression is the banal substance of chartpop, alternative music finds itself set *against* the freeflow of feeling, being-in-touch; now it fetishises being wound-up, hung-up, unrequited. "Satisfaction" is no longer an issue for the rock bohemia. Sex no longer signifies delinquency but health, fulfilment, normality.

When sex was a scarce, invisible, unattainable quantity, it was mindblowing because unthinkable. But now that sex is commonly available it can neither be the instigator of desperation (it's that state of mind that is indispensable to rock, not physical fun), nor can it be the site or cue for *jouissance*. The interesting groups today have displaced eroticism in favour of the psychedelic powers of horror. While teenyboppers listen to sophisticated, responsible pop, 26-year-old rock eggheads indulge a puerile and morbid fascination for the nasty things that *can* happen. Groups like **Big Black, Butthole Surfers, Swans, Sonic Youth** enact a kind of metaphoric auto-mutilation, knowing intuitively that the body is now the prime locus of power's operation. Both the American neo-hardcore bands and British greboes waste their potential, deliberately devastating their appearance, health, prospects . . . music.

If sexuality still figures in the marginal scheme, its shock capacity is revived by being charged with violence or perversion. With **The Young Gods, World Domination Enterprises, Skinny Puppy**, the carnal spills into carnage, the bestial fuses with the mechanical. The gnarled voraciousness of pagan rock is given range and penetration by the digital necromancy of the new sampling technology. Desire is *consuming*.

Outside in the "real" world, sex is vigorous, athletic, therapeutic, a frank and free exchange between firm bodies. **Madonna**'s spectacle of go-for-it narcissism, **George Michael** ("I Want Your Sex"; the curious armpit-sniffing pose on the cover of "Faith"): these are the models for desire in pop '87. But there still survive a few possibilities for languor, the melting of borderlines. **Prince** pines for the lost thrill of transgression as much as for flesh ("It", from the *Sign of The Times* masterpiece, insists, "Feels so good/it *must* be a crime"), but "If I Was Your Girlfriend" posited a desire so excessive that it would wish to be both sexes for the lover, to know her utterly. There's the semi-conscious, amorphous and indolent carnality of **Arthur Russell**, the troubled sexuality of **Throwing Muses** and **The Sugarcubes** . . .

For the most part, though, intellectual rock either savages the body or abandons it to the cult of health and efficiency, while itself succumbing to an impulse to levitation. The new visionary rock **(A.R. Kane, The Band Of Susans, Live Skull, Nice Strong Arm, Dinosaur, Meat Puppets, Blind Idiot God)** interferes with the normal ranking of instruments in the mix in the hope of encouraging perceptual drift; they eschew "in your face" vocals in favour of submerging the human thread beneath several layers of haze. Timeless, monotonous rhythms neglect the body: this is head music, although, paradoxically, its aim is to overturn the hegemony of the head, disperse consciousness, cloud the mind's eye. This interest in disrupting musical focus invariably connects to a lyrical worldview concerned with ambiguities, contradictions, untranscribable sensations and perceptions, visions so dazzling they're blinding rather than revelatory.

The global hegemony of "real soul" — straighttalking, wholesomeness, crushing sincerity, simple passion — has provoked a wide range of marginal responses: the glamourisation of failure, sickness and abjection; the new acid-rock proto-mystics; certain unharnessable kinds

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of sexuality; not so much pockets of resistance as pockets of difference. What seems unlikely is that they will ever impinge on mainstream pop. The best that can be hoped for is that difference will endure, act as a reproach and a lure to those who chafe against the mainstream's increasingly tight definitions of what pop and being human are all about.

Simon Reynolds

Jazz

A BROADER-BASED enthusiasm for jazz usually coincides with the music marking time, consolidating rather than reconnoitring. It happened in America during the swing era. A couple of decades later Britain witnessed the boom in "traditional jazz".

So, while 1987 has seen saxophones turning up in TV commercials and a handful of musicians — mostly black — being photographed modelling clothes, the actual playing has usually stuck to accepted forms and methods. Courtney Pine, the Jazz Warriors, Andy Sheppard, all close to being household names, acquit themselves admirably yet without being innovatory. (Though Loose Tubes could be said to have ventured into fresh territory.)

All those musicians or ensembles have popped up in these pages during the year. Not remarked upon, however, was a brief tour of Britain by a group under the leadership of **Craig Harris**, a trombonist from Long Island, still in his early thirties but prepared to rasp and growl and chortle, reasserting the earthy virtues of predecessors such as J.C. Higginbotham and "Tricky Sam" Nanton. *Shelter* (JMT 870008), by Harris' Tailgaters Tales, communicates a good deal of the excitement. And in Don Byron the band possesses one of those rarities in latterday jazz, a clarinet player.

Autumn saw the arrival of **Cecil Taylor**, as intimidating a pianist as Art Tatum must have been in his heyday. His playing, a welter of hammered chords and dazzling runs, can — despite the occasional, delicate interludes — test the stamina of audiences as well as the performer. But Taylor's latest LP, *For Olim* (Soul Note SN 1150), consists of pieces that never go on too long and are often gentle in mood and style. Timid listeners could find it an enticing introduction to the work of this extraordinary musician.

May witnessed a concert in London celebrating **Gil Evans**' 75th birthday, the nucleus of the band drawn from Evans' New York ensemble which has performed fairly regularly on Monday nights at the Greenwich Village club, Sweet Basil, where it recorded an album reviewed in the *NS* in September. Much, much earlier evidence of Evans' brilliance turns up on a 2-LP album, *Tapestries* (Affinity AFSD 1040), by **Claude Thornhill**'s Orchestra of the mid-1940s (at that time it contained the alto saxophonist Lee Konitz). There are scores from other hands as well as Evans', including Thornhill's version of his signature tune, "Snowfall". This band indulged in a kind of harmonic lusciousness that Evans harked back to when, ten years or so later, he set about fashioning pieces around Miles Davis. Thornhill resisted bebop himself, yet had the band record Evans' jauntily elaborate arrangements of "Robbins Nest" and "Yardbird Suite". Not just a part of history but captivating music too.

Alongside the birthdays, of course, were the deaths. That of Spike Hughes, for instance, inactive in jazz for over half a century and not yet properly given his due as the first important British jazz composer. (The later — and best — recordings by his British band still await reissue.) **Woody Herman**, on the other hand, kept a band on the road from 1936 almost until his death this autumn. Herman's *50th Anniversary Concert* (Concord CJ-302) ignored the famous standbys — "Four Brothers", "Caldonia", "At The Woodchoppers' Ball" — but presented a band of mostly young musicians playing scores by the trombonist John Fedchock. A stirring memorial for a man who played the clarinet and alto saxophone nicely enough, but whose major contribution to jazz was as a bandleader, a catalyst.

In an excellent book published earlier this year — *Woody Herman* (Apollo Press, £4.95) — Steve Voce mentions Herman's distaste for those

Gil Evans: happy birthday to you

"ghost bands" that go on touring long after their original leaders have died. It was a condemnation that cannot really be levelled at *Digital Duke* (GRP 91038), the work of what is described as the **Duke Ellington Orchestra**, a pick-up band assembled for this recording by Ellington's son Mercer. Happily, these are not note-for-note transcriptions of classic Ellington performances, although former Ellingtonians on hand included the trumpeter Clark Terry (he's heard in "Perdido"), trombonist Britt Woodman and the drummer Louie Bellson. Also taking part — an adventurous choice that came off — was the tenor saxophonist Branford Marsalis, only 14 when Ellington died yet who blows fresh life into "Take The 'A' Train".

Branford Marsalis, like his brother Wynton, has had experience of performing with classical ensembles. Even more experienced in that field, of course, is the violinist **Nigel Kennedy**. He devotes one side of an LP (EMI EL 27 0538 1) to Bartok's Sonata for Solo Violin, the other — aided by Alec Dankworth, bass — to "Mainly Black", his interpretation of themes from Duke Ellington's suite, *Black, Brown and Beige*, including a version of "Come Sunday" which incorporates the violin solo that Ray Nance played on the Ellington band's 1958 recording. Like many musicians whose earliest allegiance is to classical playing, Kennedy constructs variations on a theme rather than improvising above a set of harmonies as most jazz soloists do. It's an approach that suits this particular task and is, when you think about it, not so different from the way Sonny Rollins goes about things.

Stan Tracey Plays Duke Ellington (Mole Jazz MOLE 10) presents the pianist, backed up by a bassist, Roy Babbington, imposing his musical presence upon a set of tunes by either Ellington or Ellington's alter ego Billy Strayhorn. **Tracey** has always carried around his personal set of harmonies and at his hands familiar, sometimes over-familiar, pieces such as "Satin Doll" and "In A Mellow Tone" take on a startling freshness, part of a process of recomposition.

When Tracey first began to be noticed, back in the 1950s, his fondness for quirky chords and bumpy rhythms soon had him labelled as an acolyte of **Thelonious Monk**. Monk's own links with James P. Johnson, Ellington and the "stride piano" tradition in general, tended to get overlooked. But, since Monk's death in 1982, his compositions have begun to be heard more and more frequently, rivalling Ellington's for popularity with jazz improvisers. That **Steve Lacy** should come up with an LP, *Only Monk* (Soul Note SN 1180), devoted to compositions by Monk is scarcely surprising. He spent four months touring with Monk in 1960 and has always kept the tunes in his repertoire. But the decision to use just his own soprano saxophone — no piano, no bass, no drums — was really daring. Yet the composer's identity is never ignored. Maybe "Eronel" is the most satisfying track, a small masterpiece, but Lacy reveals both his own and Monk's sense of tradition — and fun — in "Little Rootie Tootie", yet another in a long line of jazz pieces about railway engines. No LP released this year is more adventurous or more certain to delight future decades.

Charles Fox

Classical

THE YEAR WAS NOT distinguished by any memorable additions to the record catalogue, but it has been marked by a further massive advance in the fortunes of the compact disc. It was the year in which the mid-price CD was well and truly launched and in which CD prices generally began to offer real competition to LPs and cassettes.

Slowly but surely the archives of the major companies are finding their way on to the new format: EMI has finally pulled itself together and established its production capability on a par with its major rivals, and the tenth anniversary of the death of **Maria Callas** served as a slightly spurious

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justification for the re-release in acceptably refurbished sound of almost all her recordings.

Deutsche Grammophon has also been investigating its back catalogue and honourably putting out a number of important compilations, especially of chamber music, at mid price. In some cases these offer the finest available versions of the repertory. **The Amadeus Quartet**'s performance of the Brahms string quintets and sextets, together with the Piano and Clarinet Quintets (DG 419 875-2; three CDs) date from the late 1960s but have scarcely been surpassed and, in the wake of the death of Peter Schidlof and the disbandment of the group, they take on a new air of regretful nostalgia.

The LaSalle Quartet's comprehensive survey of the Second Viennese School (DG 419 994-2; four CDs) simply has no rivals 16 years after it was recorded; no other quartet has combined the LaSalle's technical composure with such unfailing understanding, as convincing in the coded passion of Berg's *Lyric Suite* as in the formalism of late Schoenberg or the attenuations of early Webern. The repackaging also restores the magnificent booklet that accompanied the set when it was first released, crammed with essays and contemporary documentation and representing a genuine contribution to the scholarship and understanding of these works.

How many of the discs released for the first time in recent months will stand up so well over the years remains to be seen. It has not been a good year for new opera sets; the disappointments — Haitink's lustreless *Cosi*, Muti's untheatrical *Figaro* — bulk larger than the successes. But the version of Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* conducted by **John Eliot Gardiner** (Archiv 419 250-2; two CDs) is a substantial achievement, an 'authentic' performance, with electrifying instrumental playing, that loses none of its dramatic intensity to historical fidelity. Its cast, led by Anthony Rolfe Johnson's Orfeo, has been chosen as much for its sense of theatrical presence as for its care for musicological niceties. Gardiner unfolds this first of all operatic masterpieces with unforced naturalness; nothing on record this year has given me more pleasure than his account of the first act.

Otherwise the rewards come from tried and trusted sources. The latest instalment of **Murray Perahia**'s survey of the Beethoven piano sonatas combines two from Op.31 (nos 2 and 3) with *Les Adieux*, Op.81a (CBS MK42319): marvellously wrought readings favouring poetic intensity over steel-fingered rigour, but absolutely consistent in their approach and coloured with absorbing subtlety. Perahia also contributes to what proved to be the last recording made by the Amadeus Quartet of Brahms' G minor Piano Quartet, in which his exceptional gifts as a chamber-music player — a solo pianist of the first rank who is perfectly prepared to subsume his personal interpretative views to the collective good — are always to be heard. The result is one of the most relaxed of late Amadeus discs, broad in its scale and immaculately reined in its naunces (CBS MK42361).

Alfred Brendel's repeat visit to Brahms' First Piano Concerto, this time with the Berlin Philharmonic conducted by Claudio Abbado (Philips 420 071-2), is worth hearing too; Brendel's art appears to become ever more austere and restrained, but his command of the arching

Maria Callas: re-released

spans of this work is as convincing as ever. **Herbert von Karajan**'s *n*th recordings of the first two Brahms symphonies, also with the Berlin Phil (DG 423 141-2 and 423 142-2), seem to offer nothing new whatsoever and, in some respects (especially in the Second), represent a lethargic ghost of previously imposing readings.

Nearer home, the range of recordings emanating from **Simon Rattle** and the Birmingham orchestra seems to move into ever more monumental repertoire. This autumn batch includes both Messiaen's *Turangalîla* Symphony and Mahler's Symphony no.2, the *Resurrection*, and both have strong claims to be regarded as best buys. The *Turangalîla* (EMI CDS 747463 8; two CDs) has the weaker competition, but it would rate highly on any standard, with dashing solo piano playing from Peter Donohoe and an extrovert Ondes Martenot contribution from Tristan Murail — while Rattle's command of the score tones down the unbuttoned physicality in favour of a careful exploration of the kaleidoscope of textures. The fill-up, a distinguished analogue account of Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* with Gawriloff, Deinzer, Palm and Aloys Kontarsky, tips the balance finally in its favour.

There are no qualifications whatsoever about the success of the Mahler (EMI CDS 7 47962 8; two CDs) which achieves for the first time in my experience of this work the feat of conveying the intensity of a concert performance with the accuracy and fastidious balance of a studio recording. Rattle's opening is transfixing in its grim tension; his handling of the technicolor grandeur of the finale sane, massive and implacable.

As a cooling antidote to the vivid finery of that work I offer, to close, the latest disc from **Frans Brüggen**'s Orchestra of the 18th Century (Philips 420 241-2), which couples Mozart's *Jupiter* Symphony with the Overture to *La Clemenza di Tito*. I've praised Brüggen's thoroughly robust attitude to authenticity before here; his clean, lithe Mozart, as much as Gardiner's Monteverdi, shows the true value of performing the baroque and classical repertory on the instruments of the day, and how that revolution is changing for ever our perceptions of how that music ought to sound.

Andrew Clements

ART

The man who saw the sex in Queen Victoria

John Spurling

Franz Xaver Winterhalter and the Courts of Europe
National Portrait Gallery until 10 January, then Petit Palais, Paris
Fernand Léger: The Later Years
Whitechapel until 21 February, then Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart

QUEEN VICTORIA and Prince Albert acquired more than 100 oils from her favourite painter — and a choice selection, including the large group of semi-nude bathing beauties that she gave to Albert for his 33rd birthday, have been lent by the Queen for a full-scale rehabilitatory exhibition.

Born the son of a smallholder in the Black Forest and based most of his life in Paris, **Franz Xaver Winterhalter** achieved virtually a full house with his portraits of the crowned heads of mid-19th-century Europe. His sitters included the Queen of Spain, the King of Portugal, the King and Queen of the Belgians, King Louis-Philippe and Queen Marie-Amélie of France, their successors the Emperor Napoleon III and the Empress Eugénie, the King and Queen of Prussia, the Tsar and Tsarina of Russia, the Emperor and Empress of Austria and the short-lived Emperor Maximilian of Mexico.

Yet precisely because of his success in this rarefied circle, Winterhalter more or less ceased to count in the ordinary struggling world of Salons and rival artistic reputations; and, as the political weight of Europe shifted decisively from France and Austria to Russia and Prussia, the flimsiness of the royal masquerade he had celebrated became more obvious. Dying three years after Napoleon III's debacle at Sedan, Winterhalter is said to have asked that a box of his 12 best paintings should not be opened for 50 years, when posterity would be able to judge his real value.

The box — containing flower-pieces, battle scenes, landscapes and portraits — was opened too soon to have any effect, for his very existence has been almost forgotten, except presumably by those few heirs of his exotic sitters who can still encounter his works on their palace walls. The contents of the box are not included in this exhibition nor even referred to in Richard Ormond's and Carol Blackett-Ord's large, elegant and freshly researched catalogue (National Portrait Gallery, £12.95), so perhaps the story is a myth. At any rate, although the show includes a few of his private works, it is by his grandee portraits that this generation of posterity must reassess him.

At first the work is much what you'd expect: smooth, glossy, high-definition dummies in rich costumes and regal poses. Nothing is out place, nothing has come about by chance or whim. From the elaborate Turkey carpet, via the shiny boots, the perfectly tailored and narrowly observed trousers (King Louis-Philippe and the Duc de

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Mary Evans Picture Library

Royal erotica: Queen Victoria and Victoire, the Duchesse de Nemours, by Winterhalter (1852)

Nemour "dress", as the tailors say, on the left, but the Emperor of Austria on the right), the braided and bemedalled jacket to the precisely ordered hair, you are simply required to raise your eyes slowly and touch your own untidy forelock. But I'm speaking, as is obvious, of the male monarch or semi-monarch. What if the monarch is a woman?

The moment you're confronted with Winterhalter's first portrait of Victoria — though she looms above you impressively enough at three-quarter length against a stormy sky — your expectations begin to be baffled. It's those huge, heavy-lidded eyes and that small sensual mouth with the lower lip dropped forward and the teeth just showing (everyone agreed that no one caught Victoria's mouth as accurately as Winterhalter) that put you on the alert. Turn round and you see them again — in a small, oval, head-and-shoulders commissioned as another birthday present for Albert — but, this time, in a context of complete intimacy, the head thrown back and sideways against a crimson cushion, the loose hair floating down over her left breast, the neck and shoulders fully exposed.

This painting casts the viewer (originally, of course, only Albert) in the role of Dracula and, as you go round the rest of the show, you realise that it's the key to Winterhalter's phenomenal success with his female sitters. They compose an astonishing gallery of erotic moods and types — enough to make the coldest male viewer think himself a Byron or Onegin — from the relatively passive and modest Empress Eugénie or Princess Alexandra through the flirtatious Princess Troubetskoï and the equivocally challenging Princess Leonilla Baratinsky to the notoriously forthcoming Madame Rimsky-Korsakov, who leans her low pink décolletage, cascading tulle veil and dark tumbling hair over the back of a fur-covered chair and suggests a particularly splashy waterfall.

Winterhalter shows us that if we are accustomed to think of 19th-century royalty and its courtiers as cold, aloof and spurious, it is not how they wished to think of themselves. He wasn't flattering them so much as revealing the true nature of their appeal. They were sexual sublimations — equivalent to our pop stars, TV personalities and, indeed, princesses — and they desired to be loved, whether for their shiny boots and masterful, phallic posture or for their overwhelming combination of natural beauty and star quality with everything that jewellers, dress-makers, hairdressers and an extraordinarily clear-eyed and clever-fingered painter could add. Winterhalter's posthumous box was not, after all, necessary. He was no Van Dyck, as Victoria thought him, but for the expression of this febrile, transient, public passion he has no equal.

Fernand Léger wanted the figures he painted in the latter part of his career to be "inexpressive", since "the modern artist has had to free himself from this emotional tie in order to achieve clarity". His intention was to make his work more accessible and popular, in line with his populist and eventually communist political stance; but the change from his earlier semi-abstract mechanical subjects has generally been seen as a decline.

The current exhibition confirms that, if not exactly a decline, it was a wrong direction. Although his mastery of design remains unimpaired, the simplification and deliberate generalisation rob the work of any appeal. Is it possible to be popular, if you exclude emotion? These paintings codify the human figure into monumental, two-dimensional forms with strong outlines and lay bright colours in or around them with the extrovert artfulness of ads or posters. The detail of a lithograph used for the cover of the catalogue — a rather dreary compilation of scholastic essays (Whitechapel, £14) — looks wonderful, but the paintings on the walls have none of the poetic energy of Léger's earlier, more complex and perhaps less worked out compositions.

The drawings of cyclists, workmen on a building site or picnickers still contain much of the life the scenes must have offered him in the first place; the large, painstakingly reconstructed versions in paint freeze away its flavour and nourishment. It's the difference between a fish and a fish-finger. □

TELEVISION

People games

Hugo Williams

"SHOWN A PICTURE of a person, can you see into their personality?" asks the more-ITV-than-ITV prank-slot **Whatever Next . . .** (BBC1) as it lumbers down-market to meet the thickest person in the world. (They stop the film and you have to guess what happens next; but it's all fixed, as when a driver presses for "service" on a garage forecourt and gets a religious one.)

In any case, the answer to the question is No, but I do sometimes feel impelled to work out *who* people look like, sort of marrying them off in order to get rid of them, as in pelmanism. Les Dawson with John Prescott, for instance; John Wells with Peter Shaw; the late Eamonn Andrews with Gryf Rees Jones; Robert Vaughan with Denholm Elliott. Our own ex-editor looks just like the actor Fred MacMurray. Lucien Freud looks like Edgar Lustgarten, who, in turn, resembles Saul Bellow. Peter Ustinov is currently being imitated by poet Seamus Heaney, while Boris Becker may well turn into W.H. Auden.

Of the women, I pair Joanne Whalley with Natalie Wood, Cybill Shepherd with Grace Kelly, Jenny Agutter with Jane Fonda, Kate Adie with Charlotte Rampling, Hannah Shygulla with Prunella Scales. It's one of those TV-related diseases, like nose-picking, plot-failure or mid-programme abstraction. Sometimes I am driven mad trying to complete a pair of faces when I suddenly realise it's the person I'm sitting next to, or my wife, who actually looks like Anouk Aimée. Sometimes it's an actor's younger self I'm thinking of, as when Roger Moore or Kirk Douglas come onto a chat show and you have to guess who they used to be in the '60s. The only person who foxes everyone at this game is the hopelessly over-restored Bette Davis, who seems to have completely out-lived her old self. Perhaps it was worn out. I also have trouble with Laurence Olivier, but then, by all accounts, so does he.

Most people come to look more and more like themselves as they get older and Rex Harrison is one of those who seems to have inherited his own stereotype over the years. When he unveiled his 80-year-old self in the tactful lighting of a box of his favourite theatre, The Haymarket, for **A Damned Serious Business** (ITV), he was, despite firing on a few blank anecdotes, still recognisably the actor most admired by the serious side of his profession. Asked by Patrick Garland to say something on the technique of high comedy, he

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achieved the kind of metaphorical compression with which practitioners put teachers out of a job: "You have to have an inner bubble . . ." It left very little to be said on the subject.

Unexceptionable, if bubbly, in clips of old Korda romances, Harrison was inevitably most interesting on the subject of his greatest success, originally entitled *Lady Eliza*: "It was like a sort of happening. I'd leave the stage door and they'd be queueing round the block for standing room the following night . . . Sinatra came round and said 'You made the little wop cry' and Satchmo said 'You hit each note right in the middle, man!'" He was referring to the technique that both men made their own, of 'speaking on pitch'. On the problem of transferring a stage performance to film, Harrison made this definitive distinction: "They had to try and pull me back into a *thinking* from a *pushing* performance."

Eric Clapton, subject of last week's **The South Bank Show** (ITV), was understandably less accessible in summarising his technique: "It's just me singing. It's not any cleverness. It's just feeling."

His taste for multi-note bluesman Buddy Guy may be where rock 'n' roll fans part company with what used to be called "progressive". I got the impression that Clapton sees the guitar as a means of self-expression, vaguely connected to suffering. He was illegitimate and always felt that "my back was against the wall". As Melvyn Bragg put it, "The long wailing guitar solo is still Clapton's trademark."

He took Clapton up on his suggestion that "If you put me on a stage with Buddy Guy it's like I'm a taut string", but, watching the two ecstatic axemen egging each other on to more and more twiddly bits, you had to conclude that the string had gone slack somewhere along the way.

Clapton's life story is something else. Incredibly, he first heard the blues when Uncle Mac played Big Bill Broonzy on *Children's Hour*. He demanded a guitar from his grandmother — his mother was only 16 when he was born — and was soon playing Broonzy's "How's everything up in heaven?". "He really is a bluesman," his grandmother told us. "I love him when he plays the blues." Now how many grannies can honestly say that?

I had always thought that The Yardbirds were rather a superior group, but Clapton writes off his first associates as "a bunch of middle-class kids who wanted to go up the M1 in a van". His views were endorsed by Pete Townshend: "He was isolated by his working-class background, but he was always a face, not like those other hairy arseholes." A clip showed the truth of his words. Thus is pop history re-written.

When the band went pop, Clapton moved to John Mayall's Bluesbreakers but found them "too textbook". It was with the jazz-rock fusion supergroup Cream that he came into his own. Unusually, the band made it first in America. "Jefferson Airplane, Big Brother, Grateful Dead, they'd all been listening to the Kingston Trio or something. We went in and cleaned up."

What fun it all sounded, those far off days when all a white group had to do was get that black sound just right to become millionaires. Eric's voice faltered for the first time when he recalled the left-handed Stratocaster he'd been going to give Jimi Hendrix the night he died. □

ENVIRONMENT

Of Alley & other things

Jules Lubbock

The strata of history among which we live have shifting, impermanent meanings — whether they appear as street names or architectural styles

I HAVE BEEN SEARCHING for one of London's oddest streets. I couldn't find a trace of it in the *A-Z*, but it was there in the modern gazetteer edition of Roque's map of 1761.

So off I went to Charing Cross and quickly learnt the reason for the current omission. Flanked by a McDonald's and The Griffin Tavern runs a dingy lane between the windowless back of a modern office block and the rear of some Victorian chambers. The street sign reads "York Place". But above is a smaller, more ambiguous sign: "Formerly Of Alley".

In fact there are no fewer than four pairs of such signs in this tiny street of no addresses, which, considering the shortage of signs in streets that one has good reason to visit, is an anomaly. "York Place Formerly Of Alley" is stamped all over it. I found something so plaintive in this product of a manic bureaucratic drive at once utterly to exterminate an odd survival from the past and, at the same time, to preserve it in such truly bizarre form, that it brought to mind the epitaph on Pip's father's gravestone — "Also Georgiana Wife of the Above."

When the extravagant Second Duke of Buckingham had to sell York House he stipulated that every new street must bear part of his name and title: hence George, Villiers and Duke Streets, Of Alley and Buckingham Street.

Ever since I was quite small and discovered that Tennyson Ave was actually *Tennyson* Avenue I have mused much about street and place names. Because, in fact, we do *not* think of Cromwell in Cromwell Road, or of chickens in Poultry, and no one thinks of sugar in the Tate Gallery.

I should actually like to explode the historical or etymological fallacy: historical sources do *not* explain contemporary meanings. This applies as much to architecture as to street names. A few months ago, in an unguarded moment, I committed this very fallacy in writing that, although the left ought not to dismiss the current revival of classical architecture as right-wing nostalgia, "its associations with Nazism make it eternally unacceptable" as the style to replace Modernism.

I'd got myself into a bit of a twist, as a correspondent, Mr Ferguson from Glasgow, pointed out at the time. For styles, like street names, tend to lose their original and subsequent associations. Gothic arose as the style of the Cluniac order. Taken over by the French monarchy it became the international European style for almost four centuries, until it was dismissed as barbaric by the Italian Renaissance. It was playfully revived by the English gentry as the heraldic style of feudal paternalism, adopted by the Catholics and the Oxford Movement, appropriated as the *English* national style and finally claimed as the style of socialism by William Morris.

This, however, does not entitle one to argue, as Leon Krier* and David Watkin have done, that the intrinsic qualities of classical architecture are innocent of all moral content, nor that Hitler's terror masqueraded in a beautiful body, in the "fine" architecture of his architect Albert Speer. This shocking use of paradox to reclaim classicism is offensive, self-defeating and incorrect. Speer tells us that Hitler wanted the very form of his monuments to dominate people through every weapon of architectural psychology. He wanted a provincial farmer visiting Berlin to feel utterly crushed when he entered the Great Hall with its 700-foot dome. Speer confessed that his architecture was "an intimidating display of power" designed for historians to be able to read "Hitler's plan to dominate the world" without any other documents — even to form overwhelmingly impressive ruins.

To defend classicism one does not have to justify the so-called classical architecture of the Third Reich. One need only argue that the style has expressed many other, finer, feelings. The modest domestic classicism of 18th-century terrace houses never tried to crush people. Neither do the gardens of Stourhead or the Villa d'Este. Some stately homes, by no means all, hold one in awe, but awe is not the same as feeling crushed.

My reconsideration is prompted by my recent disagreement with Patrick Wright (see *NS* 23 and 30 October, 6 and 13 November). Both of us were guilty of the same historical fallacy. He argued that the left is precluded from straightforwardly appealing to heritage because of its employment by right-wing polemicists as the image of the traditional nation endangered by socialism. I had said that classical architecture is now contaminated by Nazism.

Our robust answer to the right should be, "Lay off — these treasures are ours as well! And we've waited long enough to enjoy them." To run instead into the arms of Richard Rogers, the Cossack of Coin Street, and ask him to run us up a Modernist "large scale popular enthusiasm" is just plain crazy.

It is crazy for these reasons. Buildings and styles can become symbols and acquire new associations, just like street names. One should therefore beware the etymological fallacy. Such "superficial" reactions certainly force real changes and adjustments in style, but one must beware confusing such associations with the real effect of the architecture. I believe buildings possess intrinsic formal properties which affect one's feelings directly, and certainly these should be subject to our moral judgments. Some styles are better equipped to express a wide range of feeling. Modernism, rejecting ornament, is singularly impoverished and usually unpleasant to live with. Classicism tends to dominate. Gothic is almost always lovely.

I have wandered far from "Of Alley" but, in wishing Mr Wright and all readers a Merry Christmas, I hope, if only for the sake of children, that you don't disapprove of *traditional* Christmas trees and *traditional* Christmas decorations. □

**Leon Krier's* Albert Speer: Architecture 1932-42 *is published by L'Archive d'Architecture Moderne, Brussels.*

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Books

COMICS

Eaten by a lion or something

Roz Kaveney

While the Dandy *celebrates its 50th birthday, edgier, angrier graphic fictions continue to play with new combinations of style, story . . . and blasphemy*

Not so much Desperate Dan as Desperately Seeking Oblivion in *Joe's Bar*

WHEN WE WERE ALL very young, the reverend Marcus Morris attempted to channel our taste for comics into that brand of liberal Christian imperialism so skilfully preached in *Eagle* and *Girl*. In between Belle of the Ballet and Dan Dare, we had to sit more often than we cared to through famous stories from the Bible, all of them done in excruciating, stilted good taste.

And some of us grew up to be the artists and writers who have contributed to Knockabout's **Outrageous Tales from the Old Testament** (£4.95), which goes to show that blasphemy is a matter of having a complex relationship with your past and your roots.

Outrageous Tales has already been greeted with tabloid and rent-a-quote MP outrage — and, of course, with vague threats of prosecution from Mary Whitehouse. In some measure, it would have failed in its purpose had it not been.

Knockabout have been prosecuted and persecuted for a variety of underground comics published or imported and there is a certain amount of anticipated *schadenfreude* in their production of a volume which, for the most part, takes stories from the Bible and handles them straightforwardly. It avoids, in other words, the mealy-mouthed toning-down that most Christians prefer when dealing with the Old Testament. Here these are stories of brutal murder, human sacrifice, rape, mutilation and massacre, and in this they are utterly faithful to their original. Dame Jill Knight MP may well be correct in her concern that all this mayhem will inspire imitation; what, at its best, the Knockabout collection does is boobytrap the Christian Right into the position of having logically (not that logic applies) to disown the original as well as the Knockabout versions.

Having said which, it must also be said that some of the sections misfire, either through being merely dull — the Creation myth section for example — or by miscalculations like the gratuitous and stereotyped homophobia of some of the Journey to Bethlehem (Judges) section. There is nothing subversive about clichéd subscription to a dominant and oppressive discourse.

At its best, *Outrageous Tales* is not only a potential *cause célèbre* but a handy sampler of some of the most interesting talents working in comics in Britain. It also shows a useful fusing of the underground and mainstream traditions. Notable are Hunter Emerson and Alan Moore's collaboration on the murderous implications of the sexual prohibitions of Leviticus, the gleeful rendition of Jael and Sisera by Julie Hollings, the OTT superheroics of Samson and a particularly muscular Delilah as drawn by Graham Higgins. There is also a beautiful and sombre minor extract from Kings, written by Neil Gaiman and drawn by Dave McKean: "The moral of this story is . . . Never listen to anyone who says God told him what you ought to be doing, not even a prophet, or you'll be eaten by a lion on your way home or something." ▷

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The rising of a new wave of comics talent in the UK has not gone unnoticed by the US moguls of DC and Marvel, of course, and the quest for "the New Alan Moore" proceeds apace, with generous contracts being waved around whenever said moguls hit London. Gaiman and McKean are compromising with the superhero comic ethos in what promises to be a stunningly beautiful and terrifying re-evaluation of the minor superheroine, Black Orchid, while we are already seeing the results of another headhunt in the writing of Jamie Delano on *Hellblazer*. Delano has taken over John Constantine, the low-rent exorcist from Moore's *Swamp Thing*, and is putting him through various excursions into the demotic demonic. **Hellblazer 3*** has a McKean cover of Constantine standing by a vampire-toothed Thatcher poster and brings him into contact with "Demon Yuppies, Soul-Brokers from Hell" who foreclose on their earthly counterparts while jogging, handing round a handy toot or listening to CDs of *Tears of Atlantis Re-Awaken the Dessicated souls of Hiroshima*. No one could ever accuse Delano of subtlety, but he has found the right Chandler-cum-Sting voice for his character and has a nice line in *film noir* dialogue and class hatred.

Not that native American talent is failing to do some moderately interesting things all of its own. Howard Chaykin clinched his reputation with the split-screen-revolutionary and perversely sexual antics of the early issues of his *American Flagg*, but seemed to be going more than a little adrift with the uncritical and undiluted vigilantism of his episodes of *The Shadow* and the inventive, but frequently grossly stereotypical, world of zombie musicians and demon hookers that he is creating in *Times Squared*.

His resurrection of the WWII **Blackhawk*** is another matter entirely, with its plump fighter ace compromised by premature anti-fascism while wise-cracking his way around the fleshpots of the East with a similarly pudgy-sexy woman Soviet agent. When Chaykin is dealing with the '80s, or with a future that satirises them, tendencies to the prurient and aesthetically authoritarian set the teeth on edge. In this nostalgic '40s hommage, played for sardonicism and for keeps, they somehow do no worse than confirm one's doubts about a supposedly more innocent age. Chaykin is a mad-dog talent, but his uncomfortable aspects go with a real vigour and a commitment to non-linear narrative and innovative use of the comic's grid that compels respect.

A minor aspect of the effect of the junta on Argentine life has been the exile of talents like those of Oscar Zarate, Jose Munoz and Carlos Sampayo. Zarate's version of Marlowe's Faust had stunning moments but failed through its overdone attempts to make the play's themes directly relevant to the 20th-century through the crudest of iconographic borrowings and levellings of parallels. His work with Alexei Sayle on **Geoffrey the Tube Train and the Fat Comedian** (Methuen, £4.95) turns what might have been a rather crass combination of anthropomorphic whimsy and self-indulgent monologue into something with edge and bite. Zarate's visions of reptilian admen, glazed commuters and demon fish make the book tremble, far more than his Faust ever did, on the brink of hell.

Munoz and Sampayo have produced, in the four sections of **Joe's Bar** (Titan, £6.95), a vision of New York as the jungle of those cities informed by exiles' combination of dread, homesickness and constant surprise. This is the America of cheap coffee and roach-filled rooms we've seen often before, but never from quite this vantage point. Munoz has a line in dark, distorted interiors and angrily mad faces which brings something new to the field, something with a different kind of passion. The field of the comic and the graphic novel is a shaker into which ever more exotic ingredients are being poured, with results that few can yet foresee. □

*Hellblazer 3 *and* Blackhawk *comics are available from specialist comic shops; the books reviewed can be got from any good bookshop.*

FASCIST MUSIC

Let no one sleep

Luca Fontana

Music in Fascist Italy
HARVEY SACHS *Weidenfeld* £18

SINKING ONE'S HANDS deep into the mire of Fascist music bureaucracy is a task that weaker stomachs than Harvey Sachs' could never accomplish. An American musicologist and conductor with a home in Tuscany, and a distinguished biographer of Arturo Toscanini, Sachs has a flair for the atmosphere of low Byzantine intrigue, Mafia protectionism, boot-licking and, most of all, favour-begging that Mussolini encouraged and controlled in his dealings with the musical world.

The Tyrant wallowed in the whole business. Hundreds of documents, carefully perused by Sachs, reports from the secret police, secret denunciations, letters of sickening flattery: all bear his hyper-virile monogram (a huge capital M; anti-fascists used to say that it stood for *merda*, shit) and orders on how to behave in each case.

All this, in Sachs' precise description, appears to result in a huge network of patronage into

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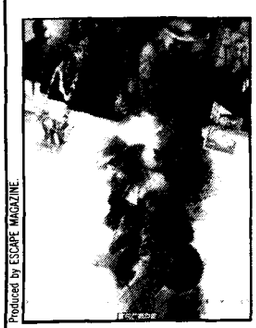

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which, little by little, the musical institutions were drawn in order to be finally subjected to central political control. In this process, the Great Corruptor seemed to find in almost everybody (with three major individual exceptions) an eager willingness to be corrupted. Major composers like Malipiero, whose relevance has been widely acknowledged by the Italian musical avant-garde of the '60s, reveal in their private correspondence with the *Duce* the petty soul of the courtier and the envious mind of the squealer.

Sachs hammers home a good moral point when he analyses the exceptions: Massimo Mila, an eminent musicologist, imprisoned for five years by the regime and who had no hesitation in joining the partisans in the mountains to fight for a renewed Italy; or Luigi Dallapiccola, who translated Schönberg's twelve-tone system (the most degenerate of all degenerate art, according to the Nazis) into his own music while living in hiding from 1938 — the year of the racial laws — till the end of the war; or Sachs' hero, Arturo Toscanini, whose case is argued once again in an extensive chapter at the end of the book. That great conductor, after a brief spell of fascination for Fascism as it presented itself in 1919 — namely, a mixture of radical socialism and anarco-syndicalism, carefully brewed in the poetics of the *uomo forte*, the strong man — made up his mind at the time of the seizure of power in 1922 and, from then on, never hid his deep dislike of the ideology. Once driven into exile, he becomes the very symbol of expatriate anti-fascism.

As an Italian I found Sachs' book a good, informative, depressing read. There are great moments of low farce when the Universal Buffoon is on stage: staring rapturously into the void while scratching his violin; sniffing at a carnation while languidly listening to a Beethoven quartet; manoeuvering to have Mascagni's last opera premièred at La Scala. Its title was *Nerone* (Nero); Mussolini had no sense of humour whatsoever.

Yet throughout the book I felt a lack of historical depth and analysis. Sachs often has to marvel at the apparent liberality of music programming in Italy under the dictatorship: whatever was banned in Germany as Jewish and degenerate could easily be found in Italy in the programmes of the Venice Biennale, the extreme example being Alban Berg's *Wozzek* performed at Rome's Teatro dell'Opera in 1942, 15 years before it reached London. This should have prompted some questions. Was Italian Fascism a totalitarian régime in cultural matters, akin to German National Socialism? Or was it rather an all-embracing system of patronage that allowed a certain aesthetic independence in music, literature and the visual arts?

Furthermore, despite the title, very little music appears to be discussed in the book which is, rather, a long list of misdeeds in music administration.

A more interesting line of enquiry would have looked into that great shift of taste, and associated turn-over in audience, that took place in the 1890s with the rise of *Verismo* in opera. Opera, till Verdi's death in 1901, had been, as Sachs himself very well says, "a refined art form with mass appeal". Couldn't it be that within the very poetics of *Verismo* — garish, vulgar sentimentality, novelettish naturalism — and within the new petit bourgeoisie that enjoyed it, was already embedded the new sensibility that flowered imperceptibly into Fascism?

Rather than speculate whether Puccini, who died in 1923, could have been a Fascist, it would be interesting to look into the substance of his operas. This extremely modern, cosmopolitan composer — entirely misrepresented, misunderstood and misperformed in Britain — was the last of our great craftsmen of opera and the first of our modern composers. Despite his constant babbling about the need for a strong man — a person about whom everybody in Italy was babbling at the turn of the century, Toscanini included — his subtle art does not fit into the aesthetics of *Verismo*, and did not fit into the rhetoric of Fascism. □

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They've had it — but historian George Comninel has leapt to rescue Marx from the tangles of the French Revolution (see review)

HISTORY

So dauntless

Gwyn Williams

Rethinking the French Revolution: Marxism and the Revisionist Challenge
GEORGE C. COMNINEL *Verso* £24.95 & £8.95

SOME YEARS AGO, confronted by an appalling plurality of 18th-century "modes of production" in a "pre-capitalist" Wales which measured scarcely 200 miles, I turned for inspiration to some works by Karl Marx.

I also returned to Alfred Cobban, that English trumpeter to the revisionist school of history in France which discounted the notion of a "bourgeois revolution" and seemed to have displaced the old unholy Sorbonne trinity of Mathiez, Lefebvre and Soboul. To my astonishment, the People's Alfred and the Workers' Karl seemed often to sound the same note. I was driven to the suspicion that French Marxists might not be Marxist.

Hard on the heels of this trauma came an analysis of the "bourgeois revolution" in 19th-century Spain by a structuralist Marxist, which provoked such homicidal rage among less beetle-browed colleagues that I began to wonder whether Spanish Marxists were Marxist either.

Now young George Comninel comes out of the West to declare that, so far as the "bourgeois revolution" is concerned, Karl Marx himself was no Marxist.

In one sense, the "bourgeois revolution" will always convey a truth — that "merely" political truth which the young Marx found inadequate and which, together with a *class* interpretation of history, was central to Liberal historiography and acquired historical power from the political struggles of the French Revolution itself. To import this Liberal doctrine into a Marxism whose terms directly contradict it, says Comninel, is to abdicate as a Marxist historian. So chuck any structural "bourgeois revolution" into the rubbish bin (outside that England which everyone knows to be peculiar) and chuck all "transitional economies" and inter-penetrating "modes of production" after it. Confront *ancien régime* and absolutist France as a society without *any* incipient capitalism and in no *transition* at all; instead, see it as a society in its own right, with its own inner logic of alienated labour, property, class formation and exploitation, like all pre-capitalist societies.

As Perry Anderson of course has been doing, after his fashion, for some time. As, too, have such disparate historians, in their fashion, as Eric Hobsbawm, Maurice Dobb, Christopher Hill, Rodney Hilton, G.E.M. de St. Croix, not to mention George Rudé, whose rescue of "the mob" from the "enormous condescension of posterity" (Edward Thompson) will certainly survive, and who contributes a foreword to this volume.

Comninel's strength, aside from a muscular and elegant mind and prose, resides in the confidence with which he plants himself on a much-crossed and corpse-strewn bridge-head, reminiscent of a D-Day beach after the great storm. He has written a scholarly and enjoyable book about Marxist interpretations of the French Revolution. Sometimes the delight is that of a secret garden, of an imagined confrontation between a Kasparov and a Bobby Fischer. But, if you have any kind of mind, you will get sustained and exacting pleasure from this book.

He accepts the real if limited success of the revisionists. Often working, ironically, from the wealth of historical research and insights generated by Marxists, they have deployed the evidence to establish that the bourgeoisie and aristocracy of *ancien régime* France were not "classes" in any capitalist sense. There was no *capitalist* overthrow of feudalism.

In its place, however, they offer little to satisfy: a conflict of anti-absolutist and enlightened élites within pre-capitalist status groups which fails adequately to account for that virulent hatred of "aristocracy" which was the theme of the entire Revolution, or indeed for the intense revolutionary zeal of the Constituent Assembly itself during the "respectable" phase, before its "derailing" by popular movements.

Those popular movements seem to survive in themselves, but are dismissed or disparaged in the style which de Gaulle's Fifth Republic has made safe for conservative liberalism. This is a political process, shrewdly analysed by Comninel, and about as meaningful for history as any Militant mumbo-jumbo to the contrary.

Nor does the most serious Marxist response — the structuralist — survive this author's strictures. In its sophisticated but Jesuitical analysis of interacting modes of production, it falls victim to a disabling teleology of "incipient capitalism". The only way, says Comninel, is to take the axe to the corrupted root, the sketchy incorporation of Liberal ideologies of bourgeoisie and class into the early and politically critical writings of Marx and Engels. He focuses on *The German Ideology* and demonstrates that its Marxist perception of alienation and class exploitation as the motor forces of history is vitiated by an instinctive acceptance of Liberal notions of class formation as a "natural" product of population growth and technical development. He argues convincingly that such pre-capitalist problems rapidly became marginal to a Marx struggling to comprehend capitalist society itself, a Marx whose casual comments upon them have since been erected into some perverse species of Holy Writ.

I would argue with him only once here. Despite a late reference to Marx's *18 Brumaire*, Comninel chooses the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 as a landmark. Not only was his history of the French Convention the great book Marx never wrote, its ghost haunted his political practice during the German Revolution of 1848-49. His break from his own past can be dated quite precisely; it falls in 1850, between the third and fourth chapters of his *Class Struggles in France*. In his *18 Brumaire*, testament to defeat and a work of history, he was to a degree anticipating his 20th-century interlocutor.

This quibble can be dismissed as a scrabble among the potsherds of a materialist dig. It is important to understand, therefore, that Comninel's is in no sense just another volume in the rescue archaeology of Marxism. On the contrary, it is a cogent book by a working historian who is salvaging historical materialism from Marx himself and who, in his closing chapters, sketches out a promising historical-materialist history of the French Revolution which he intends to write.

Whether he succeeds or not, George Comninel can know that he has re-drawn one critical map. He has also brought comfort to one marginal corner. I am emboldened once more to confront the tortuous and 200-mile strip of an 18th-century Wales and stare coolly into its four crossed eyes. □

Gwyn Williams' Artesans and Sans Culottes *is shortly to be re-published by Libris.*

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SHORT STORIES

Art of concentration

Gillian Wilce

She Has No Place in Paradise
NAWAL EL SAADAWI trans. SHIRLEY EBER
Methuen £9.95 & £3.95

NAWAL EL SAADAWI, once Egypt's Director of Public Health, has herself experienced dismissal, imprisonment (under Sadat) and censorship as well as medical practice and authorial success. In these highly concentrated stories she writes from inside her (usually unnamed) protagonists' experiences, laying hold of universal aspects of their emotions while offering — of necessity not as propaganda — oblique comment on the particular society that is their setting.

Take the first story in the collection, "She was the Weaker". It tells, in five and a half short pages, of a man's approach to the ceremony preceding his wedding but it also encompasses the whole history of his relationship with his mother as he focuses his accumulated hatred of her on to his unknown bride-to-be. At the same time, in the physical image of the girl spread out for pre-marital test of her virginity, her skirt over her head and her legs held down by two other women, it says something dreadful about sexual relationship in this society. Fear, favour-currying and corruption at work enmesh many of the men in the stories while their wives are kept in ignorance and subservience — both equally victims of social circumstance.

Often the whole story takes place within a single instant of intense physical sensation: a servant girl watches another buy and drink a soft drink and her thirst becomes greater than all the fear of what will happen to her if she spends her mistress' money; the history of a life and a marriage is reviewed within the moment of an embrace between two women friends. These are not simple stories. The reader is required to make an effort of understanding and occasionally, while the power of experience is conveyed, its exact context remains elusive. This obscurity contributes, though, to the impression of a society in which arbitrary events — demotion, imprisonment, even torture — can occur. There is one story all about torture and the strange hair's breadth separation in the victim between battered body and stubborn mind.

The collection may be beginning to sound rather depressing and there are indeed things here to terrify and alarm, but there is also an invigorating sense of the significance of each individual's experience. Circumstance is not all. Interestingly, the occasional naming of characters seems to go along with an emphasis on growth and change. In "Nobody Told Her", a nameless adolescent girl lives in fear of the "something awful" which is about to happen; in "The Picture", Nirjis makes some discoveries about growing up and about her father which alter her attitude to him. Similarly, among the stories about marriage, it is that of Khadija rather than of any of the anonymous participants which centres on a moment of changed perception and positive new feeling.

She Has No Place in Paradise, though physically slight, condenses a great deal of passion into its brief fables. They are like those capsules which look tiny but go on releasing their effect into the bloodstream for some time after you've taken them. □

FIRST NOVELS

Tortured thoughts

Richard Deveson

The Minotaur Hunt
MIRIAM HASTINGS *Harvester* £10.95
Imagining Argentina
LAWRENCE THORNTON *Bloomsbury* £11.95
Nisanit
FADIA FAQIR *Aidan Ellis* £10.50

YOU CAN TRY to capture the boredom and mess of life by writing boringly and messily, but no one will thank you for it. You can write about mental breakdown by perpetrating a porridge of lurid imagery and illogic, and people will either not thank you for it or, of course, will hail you as an impenetrable poet of the unconscious.

What is much harder is to write about mental illness both from the inside, so that it carries the sort of sense it makes to the sufferer, and from the outside, where it belongs to a social story that the sufferer can only partly see. This is what Miriam Hastings is doing in **The Minotaur Hunt** and she does it remarkably well.

Her two main characters are Chrissie and Rachel, patients in a grim hospital that was built by the Victorians as a lunatic asylum and now boasts nine miles of chronically understaffed corridors. The hospital routine, with its alternations of longueur, anarchic impromptu parties, window-smashings and dejection, is reproduced to the life. Chrissie, who has a young daughter, is full of anger and damaged pride. Her hatred of the "system" (the hospital, the world) is partly rational and partly the paranoiac reflex of her own self-hatred.

Rachel, 16 and depressed, retreats from her self-disgust and fear into a world she calls Mythonae, where all is wine-dark seas and goat-pastures, dancing and sexlessness. The story of the novel is essentially the unfolding of these two illnesses. Chrissie eventually converts her anger into the courage to leave the hospital; Rachel isn't so lucky.

The sort of condition Miriam Hastings describes especially authentically is Chrissie's paralysing inability to tell the psychiatrist what, actually, she is longing to tell him. She and the others are at the mercy of the sheer brute power of psychosis; they are also twisting on the rack of the patient-doctor transference, with all its need, fantasy, jealousy and resentment.

Beyond these private sufferings, and the gallows-humour solidarity they inspire, is the public world in which illnesses are perhaps being correctly named, and doctors are being cruel to be kind, but in which, equally — for all the patients know — cruelty may spring from crassness and failure of sympathy. This is a brave and truthful novel: rather static, possibly, and sometimes awkward, but never heavy. It offers a comedy of hope as well as of despair.

Lawrence Thornton's title, **Imagining Argentina**, is a multiple pun. He, an American (and an English professor, by the way), is imagining Argentina in writing about it, and is

Returning home after Cavafy

Anthony Healy

In the city gardens, he recalled
She looked him straight in the face
And said, "It is finished, now there can be no more chances."

How he had wept then
Remembering her naked touch
His tears falling upon the stone steps by the fountain

When he returned to his own country
The people came out in a body to meet him
They conducted him into the city
Adorned him with all the marks of a victor
And riding upon a chariot drawn by four horses
He made his entry, not through the gates,
But through a breach in the walls, made for this purpose
And a numerous train followed to do honour to the procession

The magistrates inscribed his name in the public register
And at the feasts which followed he was seated at the kings' table
Drinking wine and singing
And hearing again the poems of Pindar
He realised that when he himself ceased to care
He would understand her indifference
And he wondered how he could have felt so much
There, in the city gardens.

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asking us to do the same in reading about it. More paradoxically (and echoing that totem of the professoriate, Wallace Stevens), he is asserting that imagination is the true reality and has embodied this paradox in the conceit that his protagonist can unerringly imagine the future.

This is the Argentina of the 1970s, the "dirty war" and the disappearances. Carlos Rueda, in trauma after his wife's disappearance, discovers within himself the occult power to foresee exactly what is going to happen to other victims of the kidnap squads. The power enables him, literally, to out-think the government, because if he imagines hard enough he can actually arrange the future so that the victims are saved.

Imagination, Thornton is saying, *is* power; to use Václav Havel's phrase, it is the power of the powerless.

Those who wield the other sort of power will eventually be defeated by, precisely, the poverty of their imaginations.

Thornton imagines Argentina brilliantly in a down-to-earth sense. Buenos Aires is alive with birds and trees, smells and primary colours, back-street cafés and guitars. The case-histories of imprisonment and torture he gives us by means of Carlos' precognition are included for worthy reasons but are somehow dull, like the repetitive pornography they resemble.

About the book's main thesis there will be no unanimity, it being that sort of thesis. Stripped of its paranormal trappings, it is the noble belief that the pen is mightier than the sword — to which the reply is: "Well, it is and it isn't." It isn't, in particular, if the sword is a secret police force armed with sub-machine guns.

We know, too, that the flower of the SS shed edified tears when it listened to the Auschwitz orchestra playing music emanating from the pen of Beethoven.

There is also the further inconvenient fact that what finally did for the Argentinian junta was its own folly in brandishing its sword in the Falklands.

There is more torture in **Nisanit**, the first novel by Fadia Faqir, who was born in Amman but presently lives in Britain.

The torturer is an Israeli, his victim a Palestinian fedayee. The novel is an attempt to represent the internecine deadlock in the Middle East, partly through the minds of the two men in the brutal present and partly through the interwoven story of a Palestinian girl as it unfolds from the no less brutal '60s.

David, the Israeli, seems intended to serve as proof that the banality of evil knows no national boundaries: he does unspeakable things to his prisoner while brooding about his job, his wife's infertility and what he's going to have for supper. Shadeed, the prisoner, becomes deranged, unfortunately along lurid-porridge lines and at considerable length.

The story of Eman, the girl, yields much more insight, although it is told with an awkward terseness and an elusive logic which mean that too much historical significance is made to teeter on too many private references. The novel is an ambitious solution to a perhaps impossible task: seeing the Arab-Israel conflict whole. But it is written with unhidebound verve—and the picture of Eman's growing-up carries complete conviction. □

SECOND NOVELS

Tangled lives

Victoria Radin

The Part of Fortune
LAUREL GOLDMAN *Faber* £10.95
Love Me Tender
CATHERINE TEXIER *Boyars* £10.95
Low Overheads
MARGARET MULVIHILL *Pandora* £10.95 & £4.50
Davy Chadwick
JAMES BUCHAN *Hamish Hamilton* £9.95

LAUREL GOLDMAN'S most attractively bizarre **The Part of Fortune** is a necklace of tales. Her narrator is a female drifter of some 50 years who eschews living her life in favour of listening to other people's renditions of theirs. These she tells back at them, and us, in facsimile or transformational versions, enriching thereby both the tale and the teller. She functions rather as a psychoanalyst, though this comparison, unlike those of liar, spy, reporter and photographer, is one not made by Goldman's ruminations on the role of the storyteller, which lead with no sense of strain to the nature of artists and of art.

Her setting is an old people's home in the American South: four white residents (one of them mute), one white granddaughter, one black nurse. After a certain initial discomfort with the form, the stories of both the characters and the narrator lengthen and deepen. They are precisely imagined and vary — Goldman has a good ear for speech — from the nurse Honora Bliss' disappointments with her three husbands and fierce black activist daughter to inmate Miriam Stone's rancid recollections of her classy husband Vernon, coming home in the early hours to pee in a lavatory he infuses with the smell of sex with someone else. The stories are interspersed with the fables the narrator writes around them; with letters and with news cuttings: they are, of course, memories as well as stories and it is one of Goldman's gifts to immerse her moribund present in pasts that defuse the sadness of old age.

The tales are all, in one way or another, about love: love between mother and daughter, father and son, especially that current which passes for love between men and women. All the stories are disappointed and at least one character is a kind of monster but Goldman is irrepressibly affectionate, dry-eyed and very skilfull; through them we glimpse not only the reality of women's lives, but a seemingly spontaneous meditation on the act of writing it down.

"She feels like a vessel overflowing with voluptuous silks, spices and coffee majestically sailing upon his roused waters." *Tiens, tiens*. **Love Me Tender**, Catherine Texier's second novel, her first in English, reads like a potboiler crossed with Kathy Acker and Tama Janowitz. There are sentences like that one; the urge to describe the minutiae of sexual conduct, with a sado-masochistic bias; the *nostalgie* of downtown New York sleaze; the urge to decor. We are always told what people wear, how their apartments are furnished and precisely what it is they do in bed. Not much else. Perhaps this is all one requires in order to know someone in New York these days. The dust-jacket rave from the *New York Times* invokes the all-purpose word "modern", though without the "post-" or "ist".

Like the author, two of the protagonists are French women who live in Manhattan: one is rich and no longer young; the other is young and works as a dancer in a club. They are both involved — if this can be the word — with the same young man; but if Texier is vague about her heroines she is distinctly woozy about her heroes and one can never see what the empurpled fuss is about. All speak in an undifferentiated and curiously formal prose. Sex is greedy and hysterical and no one appears to have heard of Aids. But New York is Texier's real protagonist: through newspaper *faits divers*, radio bulletins, passages about its singularly inclement weather, the author invokes most powerfully its characteristically frantic and lidless fug. She might do better with a movie.

Margaret Mulvihill's **Low Overheads** is a zesty social satire, spattered with odd bits of fairly arcane erudition, of a London which readers of this journal and of Posy Simmonds' cartoons will recognise. Here are the alternative middle classes of the 1980s, no longer quite so political but still distinctly *marginale*. Deborah Lieberman runs a comprehensive home-birth agency — everything from astrologers to male couvades; is separated from her rich husband; is the mother of the infant Orlando; is possessed of the "Teflon factor" — a "professionally thick, non-stick skin". Vivien is her younger sister, a doctoral drop-out, pretty unhappy and a bit of a raver with men. When the young, Irish Cora enters the household as nanny she brings in her brother Patrick, contemporary hippies and an IRA connection.

Mulvihill, still quite plausibly, stirs in a riot on a neighbouring housing estate, Deborah's kleptomaniac and quite irreverant mother-in-law, also a goer, who inhabits the basement, and a yuppie, discreetly lesbian journalist friend who shops Deborah's business in an article. Her writing is fast, consistently exuberant and rhythmed. Having set up her players as rich objects of amusement, she decides to see the best in them. The young Cora stands outside the satire, a Candide to the Lieberman doings, who grows from plaintive waif to confidence in this busy, never quite New York-frantic but often nastily accurate corner of London.

James Buchan, who won the Whitbread prize for Best First Novel for *A Parish of Rich Women*, has cast his second also as a thriller. Baroque and broad-bottomed, *Davy Chadwick* takes place intentionally claustrophobically in the bizarre, crumbling, beautiful and filthy Italian villa of John and Dawn Chadwick, whose young son has been kidnapped. The story of the days following his abduction are told by the alternating diary entries of John and his old Cambridge friend William, a houseguest. It emerges, as often happens with friends, that each is highly suspicious of the other; in fact the entries brim with mutual dislike. The tension between their perspectives tears one along and I even put up with Jakob Hoffman, the grotesque, elderly, diabetic Jew who is Dawn's protector. But Buchan loses his cool in a melodramatic dénouement which involves incest and other revelations which don't conform to the world he has created. □

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ENVIRONMENT

This land is our land

Patrick Hannay

Community Architecture: How People Are Creating Their Own Environment
NICK WATES and CHARLES KNEVITT *Penguin*
£4.95

IN ONE MAJOR SENSE this book is a terrible lost opportunity. What have the two authors been doing for the many years of its preparation?

The crucial need of those who have the time and motivation to be, as the book says, "actively involved in the creation and management of the environments they live, work and play in" is the gritty, undiluted experience of others who have been through such processes and lived to tell the tales. They want dos and don'ts from the mouths of those in the heat of the action; they want to see self-criticism by those unquestioningly committed to this current version of "people power" — and none of this will they get from Wates and Knevitt. Their book is unquestioning propaganda and all the more disturbing for that.

As these two seasoned journalists know well, it takes generous amounts of time and money to record and learn about the painful, often exhilarating processes of community action and design. Current magazine budgets cannot or will not fund such valuable research, which is all the more reason for them to have attempted it. But they didn't.

Maybe they were not addressing the environmental professions, but the "general reader" to whom they refer will find the endless pages about the internal machinations of the Royal Institute of British Architects and the rise and rise of Dr Community Architecture, Rod Hackney, a tangent of inconsequential importance. The involvement of the Prince of Wales actually belongs in the same category but, as the *Sun* proprietors will tell you, Royalty sells and is listened to.

Their constant reference to Prince Charles is a sad commentary on the authors' perception of the movement of which they purport to be part. The Royal flagwavings are, moreover, an insult to the memory of those who have, since recorded history began, struggled to arrest control of land, and thus their lives, from the powerful. The authors need to see the current battle in that war (which they call Community Architecture) as precisely part of that lineage, and understand why, over and again, there has been failure. Just remember Watt Tyler and his brushes with Royalty — but then, this book is propaganda, not about learning from experience.

The authors believe Charles gave the movement the "respectability and the credibility it so badly needed". Can't they see what they are saying? That it's only when a 130,000-acre-owning landlord speaks to others of his own kind (as earlier this month Charles spoke to the City of London) that the rest of us commoners have any dignity? What a curious travesty of everything that this "bottom up" movement stands for.

"If you insist on becoming a cartoonist," said my art master in 1966, "study Trog." Now as then Trog (Wally Fawkes) stands supreme among his peers in graphic technique, but it is a sad fact that his standards are far higher than today's public expects from a cartoonist; for most readers, artistic quality comes a poor second to a good gag or point. The pressure of filling a regular slot makes it hard to bring this off every time and, when he doesn't, the strength of Trog's style works against him, making for anticlimax. This is a shame, because there is enormous pleasure to be had from his drawing, especially from his superb caricatures. TROG: FORTY GRAPHIC YEARS by Frank Whitford (Forth Estate, £12.95) shows just how consistent and versatile Trog has been — a model professional whose work has never lost its zest. (John Minnion)

One of the good bits in the book, both stylistically and in content, is Nick Wates' writing about his own home environment, Londons' Limehouse Dock, and how environmental disasters of the 1960s are being repeated all over again in the '80s. But hang on a moment: isn't this the glorious decade of community architecture, and isn't this author one of the most seasoned community activists? Isn't there a message there somewhere? Should we not wonder why community architecture flourishes most in those areas on which the powerful have turned their backs? Limehouse Dock, being in London's Docklands, is not in that category.

The list of information sources is the beginnings of a useful tool. We should also all be glad that the tales of the last two decades of pioneers — in this centuries-long movement — are, however cryptically, out in public circulation.

The Chapter Six definitions of "new organisational frameworks techniques and roles" are also valuable, but could have been half the length if all the reiterative propaganda had been exorcised. And there are nuggests of wisdom in the manifesto at the end, including some nasties which 130,000-acre landowners won't like: "Land ownership should be public information", for example. ▷

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In the light of that particular comment, what is so curious is the authors' evident belief that consensus has arrived, that apolitical realism is where it's now at. Is the left arm not connected with the right? Or did one author write about consensus, the other the manifesto? In the final chapter they conclude, "By the summer of 87 there was a new spirit of optimism in the air, 'partnership' and 'realism' were the words on everyone's lips." When partnership means the enforced, unequal marriage of publicly accountable bodies who have been brutally stripped of their funds to ensure their dependence on the market whims of various business and financial interests, then it is an insulting misnomer.

Several times in the book the authors seek to rubbish all those who raise doubts and questions. These are the actions of "ageing disorientated cynics and sceptics". But we all have a duty to be on the alert: in every field, the self-help, back-to-the-community thesis can so easily become the get-on-your-bike-and-bugger-off-because-there's-no-money-left-for-you thesis. The community architecture movement will be tolerated as long as Dr Hackney keeps talking of getting the unemployed off the streets and doing something useful, but, once those in power really rumble what Wates and Knevitt *know* that they are up to, then tolerance will come to an end. If ever the movement seriously challenges the bedrock of power, then Wates and Knevitt might wish they had concentrated less on propaganda, more on feedback from experience. At least they would then have been plying their trade and doing a real service to the community as professional journalists. □

AFRICAN MUSIC

The new chiefs

Sue Steward

African All-Stars: The Pop Music of a Continent
CHRIS STAPLETON and CHRIS MAY *Quartet* £14.95

"TRIBAL MUSIC! Tribal History! Chiefs! We don't care about Chiefs! Give us Jazz and filmstars, man! We want Duke Ellington, Satchmo and Hot Dames! Yes, brother, anything American. You can cut out all this junk about Kraals and folk tales and Basutos in blankets — forget it! You're just trying to keep us backward, that's what!"

It was 1950 when that (unnamed) South African musician put the young English editor of South Africa's *Drum* magazine, Anthony Sampson, straight about the image of his people being peddled in the media. The quote stands at a particular time in history: before the widespread debates about Black Nationalism, before the arrival of the so-called "Modern Traditionalism" Movement, which would have outlawed such comments. But its assertions (you can *hear* those exclamation marks) still clash with media stereotypes and symbolise all the misunderstandings that perpetuate them. In terms of how African music (African culture generally) is treated in the Western media, debates about Black Nationalism might never have happened; that for over 40 years the continent has been working out myriad post-colonial identities is simply ignored.

But the story of those changes is manifest in African popular (dancing) music as much as it is in hard politics.

African All-Stars records the way the music has been part of the story — as any serious study of the subject has to do. Sadly the authors' unwillingness to leave their detached position sometimes jars, but their device of allowing interviewees to make their points for them is usually successful.

That opening quote conjured for me a Zairean/Zimbabwean big band called The Real Sounds, recently chosen by *The South Bank* to illustrate African pop — its status and future here. The Real Sounds have a distinctive look: definitely Chiefs rather than American; package-tourist, show-biz tribal; beads, bare chests, loin cloths and feathers; and so different from the sophisticated urban (African and European urban) chic which clads most visiting African bands. They leave jeans and leather jackets hanging while playing on stage in gilded traditional robes or Parisian menswear, with a preference for silks, leather and gold. Irony isn't readily visible in The Real Sounds' re-adoption of tribal costumes and the bands' brief biographical entry in the substantial "Styles and Profiles" section of this book doesn't discuss this aspect. The section's function is literal description; it will be a valued guide for anyone whom even a passing hearing of African music has stirred.

Embedded in "Styles and Profiles" is a curious supplement entitled "Global Disco Domination", written by a third author, Charles LeDesma. Even the slick journalistic title sets the chapter apart from the rest of the book, while the subject matter — Zouk music, born in the tropical Antilles and rapidly maturing in Paris and several Francophonic African countries — is a cousin of the main subjects of the book.

This music is a genuinely new hybrid, born of the meeting between musicians from formerly colonised countries whose umbilical connections with Paris make that today's most significant city outside of the African continent. This chapter is timely: current UK record company interest looks set to make the bright, appealing sound of Zouk a Big Thing in this country in 1988. If LeDesma's writing seems at times more suited to magazine-time than bookshelf-life, his is all the same a valuable introduction to the music. Elegant Parisian nightclubs and hot Martiniquan bars form much of the setting, but the reliance on a handful of London-based club DJs as the commentators pulls the subject back to the local doorstep.

A bias towards music with the greatest popularity in, or greatest historical connection with, this country pervades the book. The final section, "Industry and Diaspora", includes a large piece on the British Scene which puts today's fascination with African music into a useful time context.

Sadly, however, this section lacks the vividness of earlier descriptions and the atmosphere around the story never really builds. Much more effective is the opening chapter, "Background: Urban Development", where the authors establish the story of "this stunning range of dance musics" through quotes from various characters — living and fictionalised — who lived through the eras. The nightclubs and sleazy portside bars of Port Harcourt are evoked by trumpeter Eddie Edem, a sailor in the 1950s, while Abidjan in the '40s is vividly relived in by author Bernard Dadie. Even Julius Nyerere is called upon for musical memories.

But my favourite section of the book, and the most atmospheric, is called "A Visit to Kinshasa" where Chris Stapleton takes a rapid time-trip. This is the seat of one of the continent's most popular, most lucrative and most refined modern musical styles: Soukous.

Starting with a hairy, middle-of-the-night taxi drive in search of music, the chapter takes us round the houses and haunts of the most important characters in the tale and weaves in not only history but the relationship of Zaire, Congo and other neighbouring countries to Paris and musicians from elsewhere in Africa.

Inevitably, in such an ambitious project, there will be controversial editorial decisions, but the treatment of Miriam Makeba in an off-hand less-than-a-page biography is baffling. "The Ambassadress of African Song" is her rightful title and her status in exile since the 1950s has been inspirational to many musicians and fans — certainly as much as that of her ex-husband, Hugh Masekela, who receives far more attention. The lack of discussion, generally, about women's part in this story is frustrating: the controversial Nigerian singer/writer Fela Anikulapo Kuti experienced systematic harrassment at the hands of the government, and his story is forcefully told, but his odious attitudes to women (including his 27 wives), both in life and in his song lyrics, is left unmentioned. When the talented singer-journalist-broadcaster Onyeka laments the difficulty she has with continuing work, no point is made about the clearly impossible position of women in music.

Such criticisms aside, this book is the valuable and readable story of a music which is touching the imagination of so many people in this country. You don't judge a music book by its cover but by its discography, and this one, with eight and a half pages (99 entries) is in the top league. There's a whole continent's music waiting to be listened to. □

Subway

Hagiwara Sakutaro (1886-1942)
trans. Graeme Wilson

Hanging about the subway's blue-walled
platform,
Though chances are you did not even know
Of my impatient waiting, still I waited
Hurt and impatient.
And the tail-lamp's glow,
Gleaming along blue tiles, again and again,
Diminishing, died in the tunnel.
Again and again
Into an empty dark our passions flow.

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FUN

FOOD

Green Christmas

Colin Spencer

Why not extend the season's goodwill to non-human animals? There are *alternatives to turkey, chipolatas, ham, turkey, bacon rolls, turkey . . .*

TEN MILLION TURKEYS will be killed this year for Christmas. They are, alas, anything but 'bootiful', having been bred entirely for large breasts — as a consequence of which they've become so misshapen that they neither copulate nor fly, while walking is done on inadequate legs often crippled with arthritis.

Every year 1.5 million turkeys die in overcrowded, dimly lit poultry units, where their carcases remain unnoticed, sinking ever deeper in the turkey excrement. Salmonella bacteria is, of course, rife. Warnings to defrost your bird completely and to cook it thoroughly are therefore crucial and should be carefully heeded.

But turkeys may also have antibiotic residues. One bird in every 750,000 is inspected for chemical residues, but the inspection is done at high speed — 20 birds per minute — so one wonders how thorough such a process can be. The number of carcases that are rejected is farcical: one to a half per cent.

The birds always weigh more than they should because polyphosphates are pumped into the flesh to hold added water. Though this ensures the meat is nevery dry, it makes the flesh taste more insipid. Yet this is still the favourite meal for Christmas. Surely turkey cannot now be the rare treat it once was?

The Alternative Christmas Dinner tastes better, is healthier and might even leave you with a moral afterglow. It can be wholly vegetarian or include fish. If the latter, and the housekeeping money will take the strain, order a large sea bass. Bake it in foil in the oven in the Indonesian manner, adding chopped ginger, garlic, chilli and pepper to oil sweetened with honey and coating the fish with that. If watching the cost, such a sauce will elevate a cheaper white fish like cod, and even goes well with a piece of smoked haddock. If you want an easy beginning to the meal — and one that will stimulate your palate with a rich experience — fill the cavity of ripe avocadoes with taramsalata made from smoked cod's roe.

Here are my suggestions for a vegetarian Christmas dinner for six with the added advantage that much of the preparation and cooking can be done the day before. It is worth paying a bit extra for saffron to make the rice, and a fruit salad is refreshing after the spices in the casserole. The choice of pudding is yours.

David Slim

Globe Artichokes Stuffed with Avocado

6 globe artichokes
2 ripe avocadoes
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 lemon
5 floz (150ml) sour cream
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
Parsley for garnish

A day in advance, slice off the pointed tips of the artichoke leaves, then plunge the artichokes in boiling salted water for 40 minutes. Drain and cool. Extract the centre leaves and the choke, leaving the base (the heart) and a wall of outside leaves about four thick. Refrigerate for a day. Then place all the avocado flesh into a blender with the zest and juice of the lemon and the rest of the ingredients, blending to a thick purée. Fill the centre cups of the artichokes with a portion of the purée and garnish with a little finely chopped parsley.

Mushroom Roulade

½lb (225g) frozen puff pastry, defrosted
1oz (30g) butter
1lb (455g) mushrooms, sliced
2 onions, thinly sliced
4oz (115g) cottage cheese
1 bunch parsley, finely chopped
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 egg, beaten
Sesame seeds

Preheat the oven to 425F/220C/Gas mark 7. Grease a baking sheet. Roll out the pastry thinly to a rectangle, approximately 12×15 inches (30×27.5cm). Melt the butter in a medium-sized saucepan. Add the mushrooms and onions and sauté until soft, about five minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool. Add the cheese and parsley to the mushroom mixture. Mix well and season to taste. Spread the mixture over the pastry and roll up carefully and neatly like a Swiss roll. Place on the baking sheet with the seam underneath and brush

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with beaten egg and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Bake for 30-35 minutes or until puffed up and golden-brown.

West Indian Casserole

6oz (170g) chickpeas, soaked overnight
6oz (170g) dried black beans, soaked overnight
3 tablespoons corn oil
2oz (55g) fresh root ginger, peeled and grated
2 red chillies (crushed)
5 cloves garlic, crushed
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 teaspoon mustard seeds
1 teaspoon whole cloves
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
2 cinnamon sticks
3 onions, chopped coarsely
2lb (900g) potatoes, peeled and chopped
1lb (450g) turnips, chopped
½lb (225g) French beans, trimmed and chopped
1 cabbage, chopped
1 cauliflower, separated into florets
4 tablespoons tomato purée
1 teaspoon sea salt
3oz (85g) creamed coconut, grated

This can be made two days before — the flavour will fuse better if left for a while. Drain the chickpeas and place in a large saucepan with plenty of fresh water. Bring to the boil over moderate heat, then simmer for two hours (or cook in a pressure cooker for 20 minutes). Remove from the heat and set aside, without draining. Meanwhile, drain the black beans and place in another large saucepan with plenty of fresh water. Bring to the boil over a high heat and boil fiercely for ten minutes. Remove from the heat, drain, discard the water and fill the saucepan with fresh water. Return the beans to the saucepan and simmer over moderate heat for one hour or until tender. Remove from the heat and set aside, without draining.

Heat the corn oil in a flameproof casserole over low heat. Add the ginger, garlic, cumin, chillies, mustard seeds, cloves, turmeric and cinnamon sticks. Sauté for a few minutes until the mustard seeds pop, then add the onions, potatoes, turnips, cabbage and the cooking water from the chickpeas and black beans. Bring to the boil over moderate heat, then simmer for 15 minutes. Add the cauliflower, tomato purée and salt. Simmer for five minutes, then add the chickpeas and black beans. Stir and simmer for a further three minutes. Finally, stir in the creamed coconut and simmer for two minutes. Remove from the heat and allow to cool.

Saffron Rice

6oz (170g) patna rice
Good pinch of saffron
Sea salt

Heat enough water to cover the rice by a quarter of an inch. Throw the saffron and the salt into it and let it colour, then add the rice. Turn the heat down so that the water simmers, place a lid on the pan and leave for six minutes. Turn the cooked rice out into an oven dish and dry it out a little in a warm oven.

Grapefruit and Pistachio Salad

2 ripe grapefruit
2 heads chicory
3 tablespoons pistachio nuts, shelled
3 tablespoons sour cream
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon grapefruit juice
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Peel and de-pith the grapefruit. Chop the flesh coarsely and reserve the juice to drink later, saving a tablespoon for the sauce. Lay the chicory leaves in a fan shape over a platter or arrange 3-4 on individual plates. Place a little grapefruit flesh on each piece of chicory. Mix all the rest of the ingredients, together with the grapefruit juice, and pour over the fruit. □

WINE

Barrel of Malmesey

Stephen Brook

Although considered useful for drowning dukes and seducing innocent virgins, Madeira is underappreciated as an alternative to port — but, among the season's offerings, there are some splendid bargains

THOSE OF YOU with greying hair may recall a song written and popularised by Flanders and Swann. Its refrain was "Have some Madeira, m'dear" and its theme the attempts by a salacious Edwardian roué to seduce an innocent young thing by plying her with Madeira.

A charming song in its fusty way, but it did the reputation of Madeira no end of harm. More's the pity, for good Madeira deserves to be widely appreciated — especially at festive seasons such as Christmas, when this tipple is the ideal accompaniment to lolling about in armchairs or recuperating after dutiful country walks.

Unlike vintage port, which is a fortified blend of a number of different grape varieties, Madeira is made from four different grape varieties cultivated on its remote Portuguese island and vinified separately. These are, in ascending order of sweetness and richness: Sercial, Verdelho, Bual and Malmsey.

Unfortunately, however, classification is not that simple.

Wines sold under these four names are more likely to have been made from the ubiquitous variety called Tinta Negra Mole, a conveniently versatile grape that, depending on the height at which it is grown, can impersonate the four classic varieties. However, the producers of Madeira persist in labelling their wines with the names of grapes that may be totally absent from the blend. Perhaps the EEC will put a stop to this deceptive practice.

You can find authentic Sercial or Malmsey only if you know the code. The word Reserve signifies a wine at least five years old, and Special Reserve must be over ten years old. In both cases such wines must contain at least 85 per cent of whatever grape variety is named on the label. There is a clear leap in quality between most "basic" Madeiras and the reserve wines, and then an even greater leap to the splendid, and very expensive, solera and vintage wines.

For Madeira must be the most long-lived of wines. Vintages dating from the early 19th century are still to be found, and soleras (blends based on very old wines kept in cask and occasionally topped up) from the mid-19th century are readily available — at a price.

This longevity is attributed both to the volcanic soil found throughout the island and, more convincingly, to the method, peculiar to Madeira, of heating the wine after it has been fortified. This process gives the wine its characteristic cooked or burnt nose and flavour, which is more attractive than it sounds.

Almost all Madeiras are sweet, with the exception of Sercial, a dry, nutty wine that makes an excellent chilled aperitif. Good Madeira will have high acidity to balance the rich fruitiness, with its overtones of toffee and Christmas pudding. The poorest Madeiras among the 33 I've tasted recently are those which are merely sweet.

Among the Sercials, two five-year-old wines from Cossart's and Rutherford & Miles showed well. I liked their vigour, their assertiveness, their elegance. I also enjoyed the rounded, well made wine from Henriques (Arthur Rackham, £5.65), though it is too sweet to be typical. Good Verdelho wines, which tend to be medium-dry, are harder to find; this variety takes many years to develop in bottles.

Leacock's Reserve proved the best of the bunch, with its roast-almond nose and mellowness and depth of flavour on the palate.

Cossart's charmingly named Rainwater is also worth trying, an intense, elegant wine of considerable character.

Too many of the medium-sweet Bual wines were sugary and flabby. The famous Madeira shippers such as Cossart's, Blandy's and Rutherford & Miles did not excel with these wines. I was, however, pleasantly surprised with the lightish Henriques Bual, with its nose of caramelised orange and its lively spiciness on the palate. The more raisiny Leacock's Special Reserve proved delicious, reminiscent in flavour of *crême brulée*. The little known firm of Veiga Franca (Majestic, £5.49) also make a spicy, peppery wine, though a touch too roasted in flavour.

With Malmsey, too, it was abundantly clear that the basic styles represented poor value, whereas some of the older wines were incomparably better and richer. Cossart's creamy five-year-old (Oddbins, £5.99) is extremely elegant, though in terms of concentration and richness it is outclassed by the ten-year-old from Blandy's (Oddbins £11.99) and Rutherford & Miles.

Branded Malmseys, such as that from Sainsbury's and Harvey's, were disappointing, but the inexpensive Donaldson's (Waitrose, £4.55) is astonishingly good value.

With Madeira as with most wines, you get what you pay for. With the few exceptions mentioned above, reserve and special reserve wines are worth the extra cost. Bear in mind that Madeira, being fortified, will keep fresh for weeks after opening, and so it's worth buying a good bottle and nursing it until the bottle is finally empty. If possible, open the bottle the day before and let the wine breathe for a few hours. I retasted all the wines after 24 hours and most of them were better second time around.

By happy coincidence, the ever resourceful Oddbins team are listing Cossart's five-year-old range for £5.99, and in February they will list the Cossart's ten-year-olds for £10.95, thus undercutting the competition by £1. Two marvellous Blandy's Solera wines, the 1880 Verdelho (£24.95) and 1883 Malmsey (£26.95) are also tremendous bargains but, alas, not the kind of bargain that many of us can afford to take advantage of.

No matter: the ten-year-olds are lovely concentrated wines, authentic Madeiras of great style, and long overdue for recognition as the splendid wines they are. □

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Quiz answers

(1) Careers
(a) Donald Regan; (b) Boris Yeltsin; (c) Stuart Weir; (d) Sharon Atkin; (e) Richard Heller; (f) Norman Buchan; (g) John Biffen; (h) Michael Gabbert; (i) John Mills; (j) Terry Venables; (k) Mark Thatcher; (l) Peter Brooke; (m) Alan Coren, Michael Grade and, arguably, Stuart Weir; (n) Anthony Kennedy (Supreme Court judge).

(2) References
(a) Mary Archer on the word "fragrance"; (b) Ray Whitney MP on giving Duncan Campbell a TV Series on Secrecy; (c) Patricia Hewett on the gays and lesbians issues; (d) Angela Rumbold on a *Newsnight* opinion poll; (e) Michael Heseltine on the *New Statesman*; (f) Svetlana Stalin on the Bolshevik Party; (g) David Owen on the SDP/Liberal merger plan; (h) Michael Gabbert on sex; (i) Sir Frank Cooper on detecting spy satellites; (j) Prince Charles on a microchip factory.

(3) Dialectics
(a) Prince Edward to the Press; (b) Neil Kinnock to Ken Livingstone; (c) Reagan to Healey.

(4) Geography
(a) Rhodes harbour; (b) Loch Ness; (c) Pennsylvania, Joe Biden's birthplace; (d) Barra, in the Outer Hebrides; (e) Costa Brava; (f) Heathrow; (g) Rio de Janeiro; (h) Finchley; (i) Burkina Faso; (j) Dewsbury; (k) Kilburn; (l) Poland; (m) A New York zoo; (n) Commons, between John Prescott and James Callaghan, over defence.

(5) General Knowledge
(a) Neil Kinnock; (b) Peter Bruinvels; (c) James Anderton; (d) Linda Bellos; (e) Dr Gareth Bennett; (f) Mrs Thatcher on people who "drool and drivel they care"; (g) Lord Rothschild; (h) Nicholas Ridley; (i) Keith Best.

(6) Biography
(a) Maria von Trapp; (b) Liberace; (c) Danny Kaye; (d) Lord Crowther-Hunt; (e) Alistair Maclean; (f) Cecil King; (g) Primo Levi; (h) Rita Hayworth; (i) Fred Astaire; (j) Andy Warhol.

(7) Economics
(a) Ron Todd's fictional docker earns £400 a week and has the place in Marbella; (b) The cost of John Moore's private hospital treatment; (c) The cost of trying to stop *Spycatcher* — latest published government figure; (d) Geoffrey Collier's insider dealing sentence; (e) They paid it for Van Gogh's Sunflowers; (f) Monica Coghlan's charges; (g) Simon Hayward couldn't; (h) Martin Packard from *Eleftherotypia*; (i) Jeffrey Archer from the *Star*; (j) Narendra Sethia from the *Mail on Sunday*; (k) (iii) — Maxwell v Ingrams last year.

(8) Rhetoric
(a) Alliance; (b) Labour; (c) Conservative; (d) Conservative; (e) Alliance; (f) Labour; (g) Alliance; (h) Conservative; (i) Neil Hamilton MP's student election manifesto, 1971; (j) Labour; (k) Conservative; (l) Alliance.

(9) Biology
(a) Sir Ralph Halpern; (b) Harvey Procter; (c) Gary Hart; (d) George Galloway; (e) Papendreou; (f) Cynthia Payne; (g) Ronald Thwaites QC.

(10) Mistakes
(a) About 100,000, towards the end; (b) Because President Cossiga of Italy cancelled a state visit at the last moment; (c) Lord Harmondsworth — and not Robert Maxwell; (d) 250,000 applied for BP shares; (e) SDP members, not people on an NHS waiting list.

(11) History
(a) Rudolf Hess; (b) George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*; (c) Claud Cockburn; (d) Sacheverell Sitwell (reviewed by Stephen Spender); (e) Trotsky; (f) Noel Coward.

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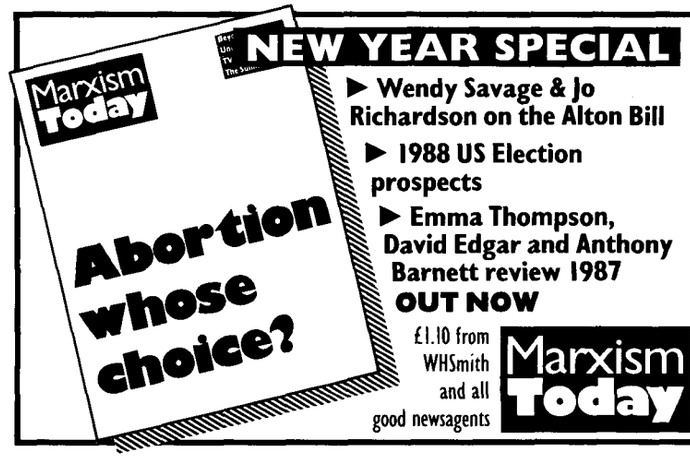
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Weekend competition

No 3006 **Set by Gerard Benson**

Ag ráfni pelgo á binyô,
Dif yolt ag rafna dxoe korr ggô,
  Qirú, qirú gileht —
Torr pelg, ish cosplin ravni ood,
Ag binyô ibhelen ta dxood;
  Ag lin Agliin ô dxeht!

Could we have translations from the (non-existent) Ish language of the above poem. Six lines of rhyming or unrhymed poetry, capturing as far as possible the spirit of the original. A *few* notes, or words of commentary, might also be appropriate. Entries by 13 January — which should give you time really to *work* at this.

No 3003 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

Letters from Santa Claus in reply to notes penned by world statespersons.

Report **By Ms de Meaner**

With what remorselessness you kick me in the teeth. Were it not for the ophidian fascination you exert on me — who can these people *be*, I keep asking, as I stare into the blankness of your handwritings, typefaces, dot-matrix print-outs, etc. — I'd have long ago abandoned you to the fates that, this week especially, you deserve. To have sent me, for this Extra-Special Christmas issue, such banal and heavy-handed *tat* . . . Excuse me; I've just ruined a quite passable corona by hurling it into the inkwell. Ah, and the cat's become a not unattractive Russian Blue. Enough. A tenner to those persons below who might, with a little bit of discipline, learn to be faintly amusing. And my wishes for an *edifying* Christmas and New Year to every one of you.

Memo: SC to MT
I could hardly believe your note. This is the sixth year running you've asked for "one or two half-way decent ministers". I honestly don't see what I can do if you keep on breaking them. They were perfectly usable when delivered.

In any case, things are hard enough up here. I've got half my packing lines idle because I can't afford skilled helpers; and it's no use your telling everybody we've increased our productivity by a sixth when all that's happened is that one of the reindeers has dropped dead and we can't have a replacement till next financial year. Anybody would think you were padding our bottom line ready for privatisation.

On second thoughts — *are you*?

NOEL PETTY

Dear Margaret,

I am afraid the remote control switches you have read about can turn off only one television at a time — the one you point it at. We have not yet got one that will turn off all the sets in the country if you don't like the programme. So when you look in your stocking don't be too cross. Instead, since you seem so interested in catching spies, I am giving you a lovely book about how to do it, by Mister Peter Wright.

love from
Father Christmas

GERARD BENSON

Dear Margaret,

I'm afraid you had the only pair of Scargill balls last Christmas — we mustn't be a greedy little girl, now must we?

But, as you say in your postscript, reindeer can be nuked same as anyone else, and I wouldn't want to upset such an important little customer. So you *can* have the orb and sceptre and the magic mirror which plays Rule Britannia and the spring-guns and man-traps for your garden and the life-size blow-up Gorbachev doll, though the Ronnie Reagan toilet paper will take a little time to print. Could you be more precise about the French doormat? And, reindeer or no reindeer, I really *can't* supply four million poisoned haggises.

Yours in grovelling apology,
Santa.

ALISON PRINCE

Dear Mikhail,

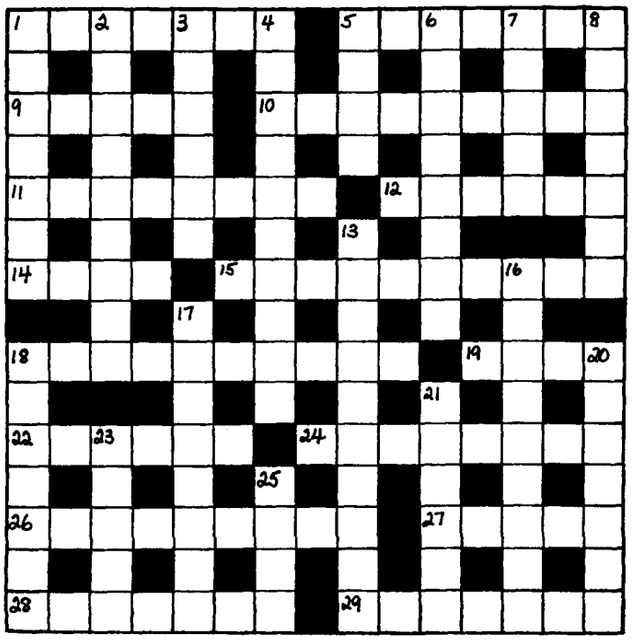
Somebody has been pulling your leg. There is no such thing as a Chernobyl Prize. You'll get a baboushka doll as usual.

Love from
Santa.

EVE RYMAN

Weekend Crossword 1581

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1581, New Statesman, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ, by first post 11 January.



Name_____

Address_____

_____

ACROSS

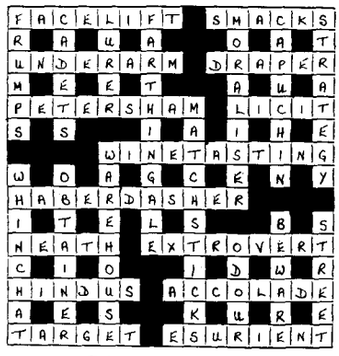
1. Socialist views may make one smile about an establishment journal (7)
5. Piece of writing which makes old men wise (7)
9. Fine services including right to provide land (5)
10. Match of seeds out of condition (9)
11. Programme in which naval craft carry a comrade back (8)
12. A dagger may be secreted in a blouse (6)
14. In this gang the animals are back (4)
15. To keep fewer planes inactive is unreasonable (10)
18. Car worked with someone without an instructor (10)
19. Greedy for a small bit of old money (4)
22. The first thing for sale, a back number, is liquid (6)
24. The motorist keeps nothing inside him, being a drunkard (8)
26. It produces a distinguished paper to study after a drink (9)
27. Bird beheads dog (5)
28. Imagined me in the grip of terror (7)
29. Store away when Donald returns it (7)

DOWN

1. The union shows Albert's head is held by a cat (7)
2. Escape without anger in a warm glow (9)
3. Set up in office in the main Stalin era (6)
4. Possibly made square to go in disguise (10)
5. He provides women although Philip is just about married (4)
6. Furniture for such marvellous people like Lloyd (8)
7. Book without article or make cancellation (5)
8. Joins up although less tin is used (7)
13. Two kinds of biscuit for the ballet (10)
16. Imagines a drop in displays of jealousy (9)
17. Go and admire changes in character (8)
18. Granted the holy one has lost his head (7)
20. Coloured up and departed for the river (7)
21. Look for shepherdess after a frightening sound (6)
23. A part of an article after giving it up (6)
25. Literary man who is wrong about right (4)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1579



Prizewinners to 1579

Mrs W. Whiteley (Ilkley, W. Yorks.)
T. Perrott (London N10)
Ms J. Watson (London E5)

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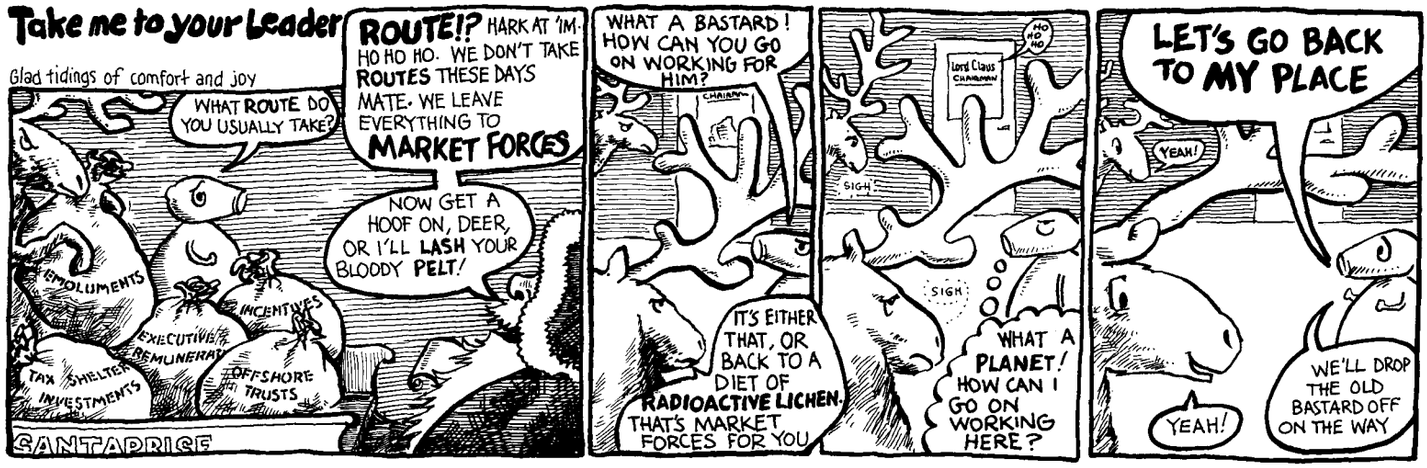
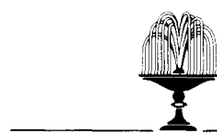

Take me to your Leader
Glad tidings of comfort and joy
WHAT ROUTE DO YOU USUALLY TAKE?
ROUTE!? HARK AT 'IM. HO HO HO. WE DON'T TAKE ROUTES THESE DAYS MATE. WE LEAVE EVERYTHING TO MARKET FORCES
NOW GET A HOOF ON, DEER, OR I'LL LASH YOUR BLOODY PELT!
EMOLUMENTS
INCENTIVES
EXECUTIVE REMUNERATION
TAX SHELTER INVESTMENTS
OFFSHORE TRUSTS
SANTAPRICE
WHAT A BASTARD! HOW CAN YOU GO ON WORKING FOR HIM?
IT'S EITHER THAT, OR BACK TO A DIET OF RADIOACTIVE LICHEN. THAT'S MARKET FORCES FOR YOU
HO HO HO
Lord Claus CHAIRMAN
SIGH
SIGH
WHAT A PLANET! HOW CAN I GO ON WORKING HERE?
LET'S GO BACK TO MY PLACE
YEAH!
YEAH!
WE'LL DROP THE OLD BASTARD OFF ON THE WAY

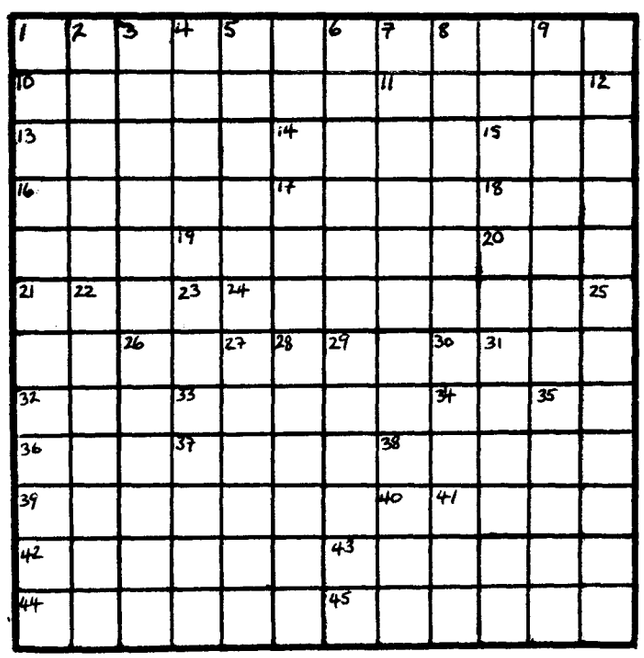
Salamanca 128

'X-mascellancy'

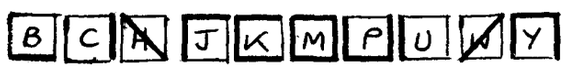
PRIZES: Copies of *The Collins English Dictionary* for the first five correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 128, New Statesman, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ, by first post 18 January.*



COLLINS DICTIONARIES



In an effort to combine many of the elements of the season the puzzle which requires no normal barlines employs the following: R — Riddles, in which each punning Q & A contains a definition and hidden jumble of its answer; C — Charade clues containing a definition and a hidden jumble to a word which rhymes with the answer really required of the same length, while hidden in the clue is also a definition/hint to this word, the grid entry; H — Halves, whose clues contain two definitions each with subsidiary indications treating the two answers as if they were originally joined (like halves of a cracker), solvers to determine which word belongs where; M — Motto, where each clue apart from one which contains an entire extraneous word has an extra letter in the definition part, these letters with the word making an apt exhortation. A *crucial change* (not clued) must be made throughout wherever it occurs, this linked to a theme solvers will discover if they apply the following notations to the relevant squares wherever they occur:



(It is hoped solvers will forgive the foreign words and the odd word at 19 — sacrifices for a better cause!)

ACROSS

R 2 (5) Q. What might you call Roger Moore's *latest* in which he wears a sheer satin straitjacket?
6 (6) A. A bold and gripping *Bond* 'film'!

M 10 (6) In a feast way to take crafty peek inside

H 11&42 (5) A macaw, if hot, needing a preen in tree band

M 13 (4) Nesta, getting third place in every Olympic hurdle-race, say

H 15 & 39 (3) Etched out this foreign letter

C 16 (5) Who lives in a damp place with reeds etc. surrounding?

R 17 (4) Q. What, in the German world, *get acclaim for man's* well-mastered locks?
18 (3) A. Barrels of Herr's praise! (hairsprays)

M 19 (6) Wanderer, *no weak one* perhaps, if to make trip again

C 20 (3) Equipment with tub — also fit kid-name for Chris

H 21 & 30 (4) Hotel cop taking a dive into real swimming bath

M 24 (3) Dit's played by dead jazz musician

M 28 (3) Jock's cratch located in barnlike place

C 32 (3) Drunken man you could find wandering about lost

M 33 (6) How anyone big bellied's to paddle in the Sea, say

R 36 (3) Q. Who's fairly upper crust but born in the valley?
37 (4) A. His in-bread Lordship!

C 38 (5) Such good taste may firstly encompass a gentlemanly manner

M 41 (4) Nits shelter in a tree?

M 43 (6) Begin writing haiku in school — what a Chinese Keats!

R 44 (6) Q. What might you call reproduction oil paintings of feline royalty?
45 (5) A. Varnished colour 'prince' of queens!

DOWN

R 1 (7) Q. What stop flies and *mess settling high up on French* car?
2 (5) A. Summit like windscreen Ypres! (something/wipers)

M 3 (6) Poet, not one leading with fellow gone far afield in Scotland

H 4 & 34 (5) DIY Co. (Syria) put out noisy entertainment this month

M 5 (3) Nearly subject to change in this cool diagram

H 6 & 28 (6) Bike with creak due for repair? Japs perform this order

H 7 & 27 (6) Tinder, one based loosely on a mutual aid

M 8 (5,2) Showed danger with extraordinary trick lacking finish

R 9 (7) Q. How might you describe socialist waitresses desperately needing to bring in a new order?
12 (3) A. Women serving in a state!

M 14 (4) This person's useless with butter

C 15 (4) Boot spades beside another garden tool — hose?

M 22 (7) Doges get aid perhaps to carry stick round for them

M 23 (7) Merry ball — one chucked out? The opposite!

R 25 (7) Q. What's intentionally said in a legal declaration by a *writer re* Texas?
26 (4) A. An author-ised State meant! (statement)

R 29 (4) Q. What might a first former call *freehand* letters?
31 (6) A. Writing on the skin!

C 35 (5) Works on gum, say, to the ear select

R 36 (3) Q. What might judge infer from Mrs Malaprop as having stupid mouths open on Nile Street?
40 (3) A. Those barmy alley gapers! (alligators)

*The solution to Salamanca 128 will be published in our 22 January 1988 issue.

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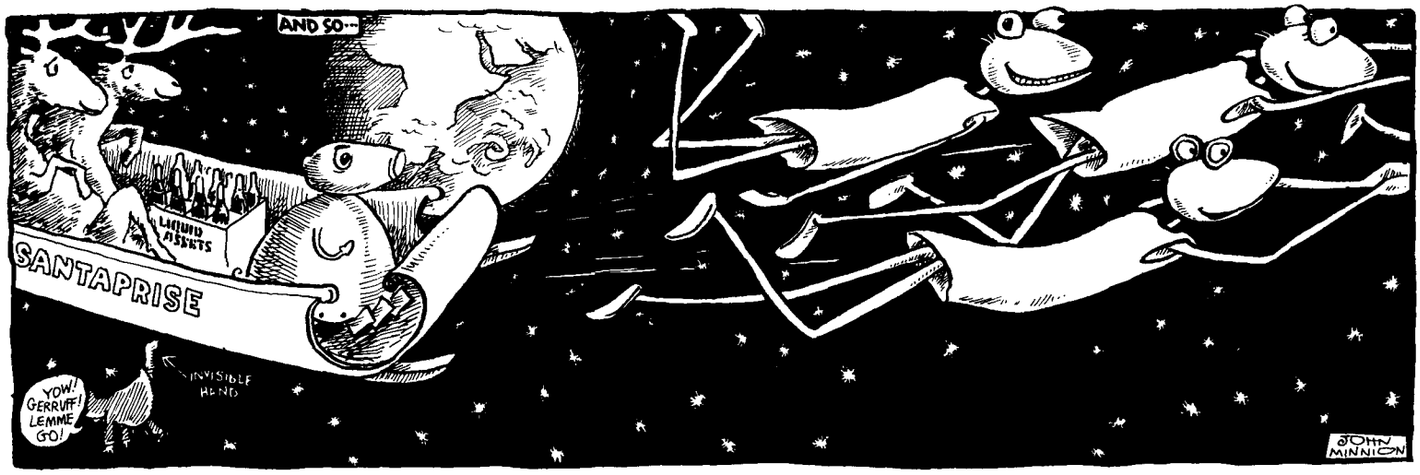


Chess

DON'T FORGET that 31 December is not only the last day of 1987, but also the closing date by which original studies should be entered for the *Assiac Memorial Tourney*. At least, that is the official deadline. Seasonal allowances for our creaking postal system will combine with my softness of heart to yield a few days of grace.

Composers do indeed deserve more than a little consideration. Can you imagine the perfectionism that makes them fret over the finishing touches? I used to harbour an idyllic conception of composers; they would be at once scholarly and artistic, expecting nothing more from their labours than the pleasures of creation and the chance to entertain. In Britain we are now supposed to find it easier to believe in unicorns than in the existence of such an angelic breed. "The political agenda has been re-defined" — in such a way that people have almost given up objecting to the idea that money is the measure of all things. Do you listen for the echoes of this creed? Sugary sweet they can sound, like "respect for the consumer". The sour meaning is that your regard for others should depend on the depth of their purses. My experience so far has tended to confirm the idyllic conception. Composers are much as I always hoped they would be, and yet at the same time, their special accomplishments aside, quite ordinary people.

If you are wondering how to make a start in composition, the basic advice must be that there is no substitute for familiarity with the works of other composers. To draw inspiration? Well, maybe. But the main reason is that in the composition of studies there is a great danger of wasting one's time over "re-inventing the wheel". Hence the necessity of a scholarly approach, since it can be rather embarrassing to find that your effort has only produced a crude version of a theme that had been given an elegant setting years ago,

But in any case, from solving to composing is a natural progression. The first thing to attend to is the development of your powers as a solver. To this end authoritative help is provided by a newly published book, *Solving in Style* by John Nunn (Batsford, £12.95). Its purpose is to introduce exponents of the orthodox, competitive form of chess (over-the-board players) to composed problems and studies, and to pass on a few heuristic techniques in the art of solving. I can't think of anyone better qualified to do this job than Nunn, who is an expert solver and sometime composer — in addition, of course, to being a strong OTB grandmaster. And the best thing of all about the book is the incisive clarity of the writing, the product of a razor-sharp mind which has been trained to cut a clear path through a mass of complications. In fact, I just love this book.

However, I can't say that I love every genre of chess problem. My emphasis on the competitive form of the game will be obvious to regular readers, and it's entirely intentional. Even among studies I prefer specimens that are related to the OTB business, game-like settings which encapsulate a tactical theme or make a contribution to endgame theory. This may just be the prejudice of a practical player. If so, it's a prejudice that Nunn does not share, though he recognizes that OTB players are frequently "put off by the unnatural appearance of the positions, the jargon used by problemists and the fact that they dont know how to go about solving problems". Nunn can explain the jargon and teach solving techniques. Yet he can do no more than invite us to get accustomed to the unnatural initial positions to be found in most problems other than studies (and Nunn covers quite a wide range of these, including mates in 2, mates in 3, mates in more, helpmates, selfmates, and retro-analyses).

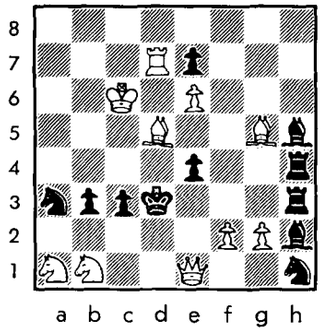
But it's those weird positions, which could never have arisen in a rationally conducted game and in which the pieces just seem to have been splattered on the board, that are the whole problem with problems. What's more, I think it's an aesthetic problem. Let's poach an example from Nunn's book. We ought to take a difficult case, a case in which the funny position is the only thing one could object to. Diagram 1 reproduces a prize-winning composition, of obvious merit, by a revered problemist (Comins Mansfield, 1956). White to play and mate in 2. It's an example of the *Novotny* theme, and a very clever example too. A *Novotny* is, briefly, the defeat of a defence by playing an attacking piece to the point of intersection of the lines of action of a pair of defenders; whichever defender captures interferes with his partner. Thus, in diagram 1, the Black pieces on h2-h5, all stopping distinct mates, are prone to mutual interference. For example, after 1. g1 (which *isn't* the solution) 1 . . . Rxg4 allows 2. Qd1 and 1 . . . Bxg4 allows 2. Qxe4. Now if you look at the position carefully, and in the sort of systematic way that Nunn recommends, you will notice that there are in fact no less than 5 candidate key-moves wnich set up a Novotny — 1. f3, 1. f4, 1. g3, 1. g4 and 1. Bf4. Yet through the composer's cunning arrangements only one of these 5 moves ensures mate in 2 against any Black defence.

Since I agree, indeed positively insist, that this is an illustration of the Novotny theme, exhibiting remarkable ingenuity on the composer's part, what is there not to like about it? To this I reply (at the cost of offence to problemists and yuletide nausea all round): have you ever seen a life-size statue in butter? I have, and I'm afraid that mates in 2 or 3 are liable to remind me of it. There is something distasteful in the irrationality of the position, and something aesthetically unsatisfying in its manifest contrivance. This latter feature is what makes heuristics so readily applicable to solving this sort of problem. Once you know the themes to look for you can see how they have been built into the position.

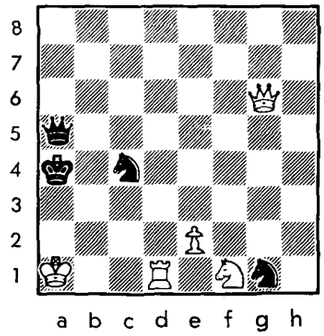
The issue is not of things which are good and bad, but the pleasant consideration of which good thing is better. My aim is to praise studies, rather than condemn other problems. So let us have a contrast case, our diagram 2, which is Nunn's diagram 119. This is a study by V. Pachman first published in *The Problemist* (1st prize 1980/1). White is to play and find a way to draw. It's difficult enough to find a way of staving off Black's immediate mating threats. As an aid to solving, I will say that in the main line White sheds all his pieces but the Knight, while the Black forces remain intact. That should be a sufficient indication of the theme, so now you just have to work out where the White King will have to be . . .

In case this display of my own tastes alarms any of the entrants to our own tourney, let me make haste to add that our two judges are in fact GMs Jon Speelman and Jonathan Mestel and that they are undoubtedly both more broad-minded than I am. Incidentally, these two also rendered a valuable service by taking on 56 opponents (including our new editor, Stuart Weir) in the *Chess for Nicaragua* event on 28 November. The latest estimate of the proceeds that I heard was that something like £2,000 would be going into the Nicaraguan Health Fund. That's little enough compared to the dollars that have been poured into the destabilisation of the Sandinista regime. But at least it's a positive precedent. I hope that in the New Year we can do something like this again, on a rather larger scale.

Position 1



Position 2



George Botterill

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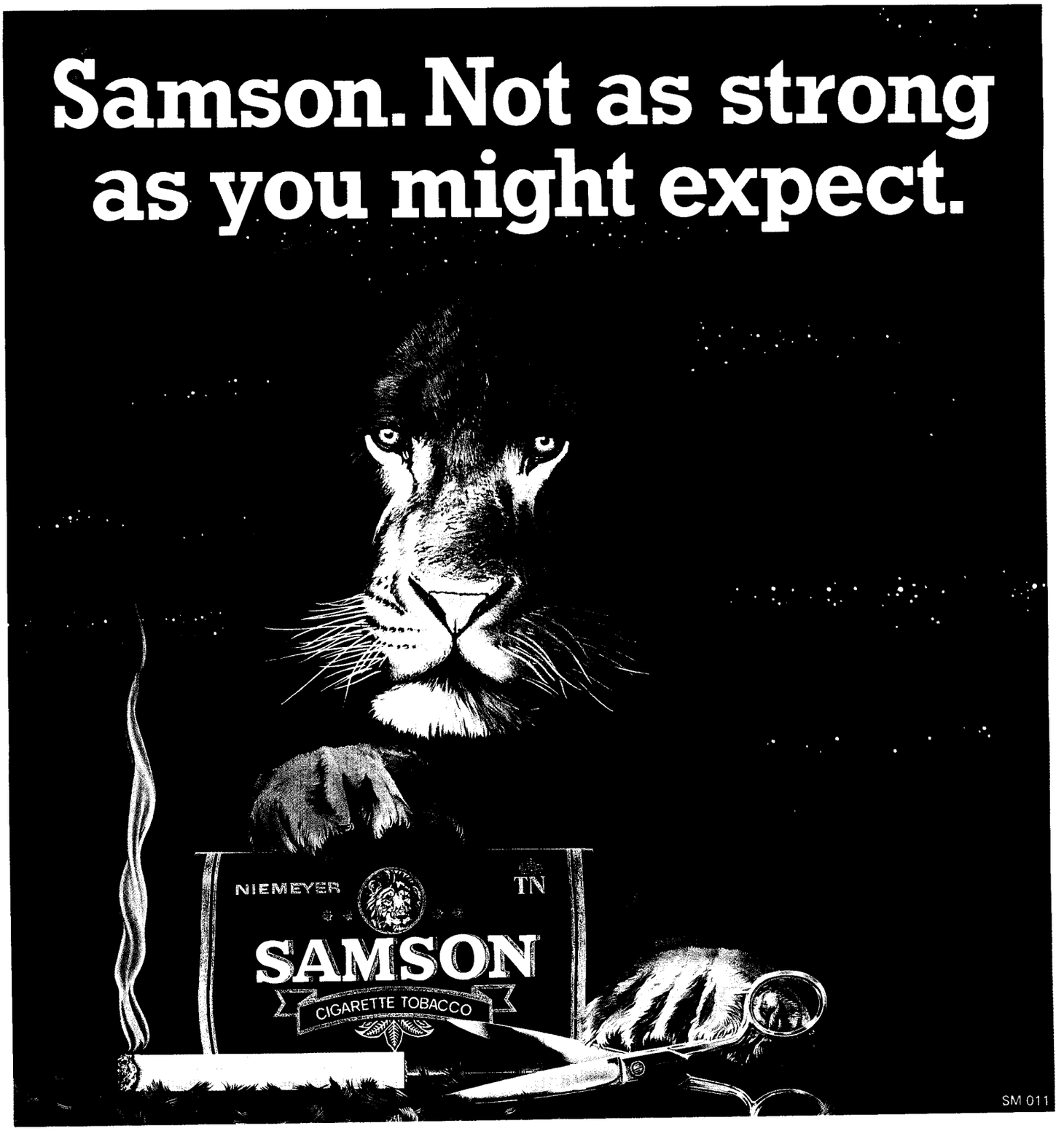
Samson. Not as strong as you might expect.



Warning: MORE THAN 30,000 PEOPLE DIE EACH YEAR IN THE UK FROM LUNG CANCER

Health Departments' Chief Medical Officers

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